

1 Introduction

The Wanganui District Council commissioned Opus International Consultants and Conservation Architect Ian Bowman to revise the existing District Plan Heritage Inventory and to explore a number of other potential heritage items that may be worthy of protection under the Proposed Wanganui District Plan. Post the awarding of the tender the Wanganui District Council agreed to a variation to undertake a comprehensive residential survey in order to improve the quality of the existing residential assessments.

The principal requirements of the brief were to:

- recommend a methodology for identification of heritage resources
- carry out a thematic assessment
- use the methodology proposed, to review an additional list of heritage resources, following identification, research, analysis and assessment
- the heritage resources to be assessed comprise buildings and structures, places, objects, heritage areas and places
- sites of significance to Maori and archaeological sites and areas were not included in the brief.

2 Consultation

The brief did not include public consultation though advice was offered to Council. Council were very keen to undertake the work in a transparent manner ensuring that the affected land owners and the community were aware of the process.

The steps that have occurred to date include:

- A letter to all land owners advising them of the Inventory process and inviting them to attend a briefing meeting. The briefing was held at the Grand Hotel on 31 January 2012. Owners have been invited to maintain contact with Clive Aim Senior Policy Analyst throughout the process.
- Owners were also invited to participate in the site inspection should they wish to do so. A number of owners accepted this offer and met on site with Ian Bowman.
- The Council had a stall at the Wanganui Market on Saturday 18 February 2012 asking the community to provide input into the values or otherwise of heritage, to provide feedback on buildings they considered worthy of listing plus an indication of willingness to pay.
- A workshop was held with Council members, staff, members of the local historic society and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust to explain the process and seek feedback. The stakeholders provided advice on perceived risks of and risks to heritage that will feed into the evaluation process.
- A further workshop was held with Council on 16 April 2012 to discuss the proposed listings and the categories they may fall into.
- It is anticipated that Council after their meeting on 30 April will recommend the release of the record sheets to owners and the community for further feedback.

3 Methodology

The methodology to identify heritage resources was based on a two-pronged approach; a thematic assessment and an area-based visual survey.

3.1 Thematic assessment

A theme-based study firstly prepares a thematic historical overview, to identify the principal historical events, people and developments in Wanganui's history, which are presented in a thematic rather than chronological manner. The overview then derives a list of themes specific to the history of Wanganui so that the Council can check the extent to which its current listing of heritage resources in the Wanganui District Plan are comprehensive and representative of all aspects of the town's history, and to identify any additional heritage resources where this is not the case.

The following themes were identified:

- **Early settlement**
The founding of Wanganui; settlement history; physical growth, including street patterns; stages of built development; architecture; public open spaces; historic preservation
- **Residential**
Dwellings; social class in Wanganui, accommodation establishments
- **Industrial**
Industry
- **Agricultural**
Farming and rural development
- **Commerce**
Commerce and shopping; the professions; city development
- **Transport**
Roads; railway; river transport, air travel; telegraph and telephone
- **Civic/Administration**
Libraries, theatres, art galleries, Council activities
- **Health**
Hospitals and essential infrastructure for healthy living
- **Education**
Schools and other educational institutions
- **Religion**
Churches and religious life
- **Recreation**
Sports as social activities; sportsgrounds
- **Community**
Clubs, societies, lodges and other social institutions;
- **Memorials**
Commemorations
- **Military**
Presence of the armed services; defensive measures; war memorials

Buildings, places and objects, which represented these themes, recommended for consideration for listing.

3.2 Area-based visual survey

A street survey was undertaken of all of the buildings on the lists provided by the District Council in the tender document. In addition to this a full residential survey was undertaken to ensure that there was a consistent approach to evaluation and that all themes and types of residential building were identified and that the best examples of each period or theme were recorded. The street survey identified heritage values by age, style, form of construction, group value and contribution to the streetscape. The assessments were made on the basis of external viewing of the property from the street and no interiors were inspected.

The survey was prepared using a standardized inventory sheet to collect visual data during the inspection. The format of the sheet was based on the ICOMOS, *Principles For The Recording Of Monuments, Groups Of Buildings And Sites*, 1996.

The principal information collected included:

- heritage resource type (eg building, object, area)
- type of resource (eg domestic, military, infrastructure)
- era of construction (eg Edwardian, Inter-war)
- street address
- construction materials
- date of survey
- surveyor
- rarity/special features, context/group values, fragility and vulnerability

3.4 Research

Historians, Val Burr and Nick Cable, have researched primary and secondary records to establish as detailed a history as possible within the time allowed. The historians were fortunate to have the advice and expertise of Wendy Pettigrew, a local historian, who has done much research of the history of the District. The author's are grateful for her contribution and record sheets that have been adapted from Wendy Pettigrew's research have been acknowledged accordingly.

Documents consulted include certificates of title, deeds, Council archives, and local, regional and national histories. Areas for research included:

- the history of the site and its development
- the history of building construction and subsequent alterations and additions
- the history of significant events and people associated with the building
- a brief history of the construction firm, significant trades people, architects and other professionals involved

Council archives provided building consent information including plans and specifications as well as consent application documents.

4 Basis of assessment

The basis of assessment of heritage items is the RMA criteria of archaeological, architectural, cultural, historic, scientific and technological. There are no specific definitions of these criteria in the Act, however, the NZHPT [Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance Information Sheet 2](#) gives a detailed explanation and an expansion in the meaning of these terms, and these have been used to assess potential new heritage listings. The criteria in [Sheet 2](#) are grouped as follows:

4.1 Physical values

- Archaeological information
The potential for information about human history through archaeology
- Architecture
Architectural significance through design and use of materials or craftsmanship
- Technology and engineering
Significant innovation or invention in the use of construction, technology or materials
- Scientific
The potential for scientific information on the region
- Rarity
- Representativeness
- Integrity
- Vulnerability
- Context or group

4.2 Historic values

- People
- Patterns
- Events

4.3 Cultural values

- Identity
- Public esteem
- Commemorative
- Education
- Statutory recognition

5.0 Standard inventory record

In order to present the historical research and visually identified information, a standardised inventory format was prepared. The sheet is divided into seven main headings, with an assessment summary as follows:

5.1 Summary information

- Location
- Building type/use
- Photograph
- Architect
- Construction date
- Physical Description
- Materials
- Architectural style
- Use/building type
- Date and compiler
- Plans
- Legal description
- NZHPT registration (if registered)

5.2 Physical and social history

- Site history
- Modifications

5.3 Architectural design

Based on either visual information or Council archive documentation, the following elements of the structure were described:

- Plan
- Style
- Construction
- Materials

5.4 Association with themes

Each of the proposed items for listings was described according to the theme or themes with which they are associated.

5.5 Heritage values

Based on the information able to be established in above, the potential heritage item was assessed and described as to which NZHPT heritage values it represented: physical, historic or cultural values.

5.6 Assessment of significance

Based on the identified and extent of heritage values, the item was ranked as to whether the values represented are high, moderate, or low and whether it was significant from a national, regional, or local perspective. A recommendation was given, as to what class of heritage building, place or object, the item should be listed as in the District Plan. The following assessment to define rankings was used:

5.6.1 Physical Considerations

Rarity / Special Features: *The unique, uncommon or rare features of a place.*

Integrity: *The condition, quality and state of original features of a place or area. Comparison with other examples of its class. The quality of any restoration, addition or modification of the place.*

Representativeness: *The characteristics and relationships of the place to other places in its class, in respect of design, type, features, technology, use, activity, location, origin.*

Context/Group Value: *Association with other places, areas, or elements of its context. Association with and illustration of broad patterns of history. Places in which evidence of the association or event survives in situ, or in which the settings are substantially intact.*

Diversity (Form and Features): *The characteristics, diversity and pattern of a place. The cultural and historical influences which have affected the form and components of the place. Form, scale, colour, texture and materials.*

Fragility / Vulnerability: *The components, form and structure of a place and the effect of this on its survival. Its vulnerability to deterioration or destruction. The degree to which it is threatened and its context in terms of protection and services.*

This was followed by examining each of the RMA qualities.

Archaeological Qualities

- a) Information – *The potential for the place to define or expand knowledge of earlier human occupation, activities, or events through investigation using archaeological methods.*
- b) Research – *The potential of the place to provide evidence to address archaeological research questions.*
- c) Recognition or Protection – *The place is registered with the NZHPT for its archaeological value, or recorded by the NZAA Site Recording Scheme, or is an 'archaeological site' as defined by the HPA 1993.*

Architectural Qualities

- a) Site or Type – *The style of the building is representative of a significant development period in the region or the nation. The building is associated with a significant activity.*

- b) Design – *The building has distinctive or special attributes of an aesthetic or functional nature. These may include massing, proportion, materials, detail, fenestration, ornamentation, artwork, functional layout, landmark status or symbolic value.*
- c) Construction – *The building uses unique or uncommon building materials, or demonstrates an innovative method of construction, or is an early example of the use of a particular building technique.*
- d) Designer or Builder – *The building’s architect, designer, engineer or builder was a notable practitioner or made a significant contribution to the region or nation.*

Historic Qualities

- a) Associative Value – *The place has a direct association with, or relationship to, a group, institution, event or activity of historical significance.*
- b) Historical Pattern – *The place is associated with broad patterns of local or national history, including development and settlement patterns, early or important transportation routes, social or economic trends and activities.*

Scientific Qualities

- a) Information – *The potential for the place or area to contribute further information and the importance of the data involved, its rarity, quality or representativeness.*
- b) Potential for Scientific Research – *The degree to which the place may contribute further information and the importance of the data involved, its rarity, quality or representativeness.*

Technical Qualities

- a) Technical Achievement – *The place shows a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular time or is associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.*

Cultural Qualities

- a) Sentiment – *The place is important as a focus of spiritual, political, national or other cultural sentiment.*
- b) Identity – *The place is a context for community identity or sense of place, and provides evidence of cultural or historical continuity.*
- c) Amenity or education – *The place has symbolic or commemorative significance to people who use or have used it, or to the descendents of such people. The interpretative capacity of the place and its potential to increase understanding of past life ways or events.*

5.6.3 Assessment of significance Rankings

The values of the place or object

- High at an international or national level it is ranked highly in a number of heritage areas and has high integrity or has very significant values in one heritage value. These are proposed Class A Items
- Moderate at a regional or local level it has several high heritage values and/or has moderate to good integrity. These are proposed Class B items
- Low it has a few heritage values but these have been in some way compromised. These are proposed Class C items.

Assessment Assumptions and Summary of Recommended Rules

Wanganui District Council has a considerable heritage resource across all the themes with it being particularly rich in institutional buildings. The approach taken in this study is to ensure that all themes are traversed and weighted consistently across the themes. It is also accepted that it is not practical or affordable to protect all heritage items in the District under a regulatory regime. In many cases where attention is drawn to heritage values many owners respond positively and elect to protect the values without Council intervention. There are however a number of items that are internationally, nationally or regionally significant and where protection needs to be ensured. It is in those circumstances a regulatory regime is recommended. The regulation proposed below seeks to ensure that:

- only the heritage fabric is protected, that owners are not caught up in regulation by needing to seek consents where demolition or removal of fabric will improve the quality of the heritage item
- adaptive re-use is encouraged
- nationally or internationally significant items are afforded a higher level of protection thus facilitating applications for contestable heritage funding and providing guidance on where Council may elect to invest in heritage
- earthquake strengthening needs to protect essential heritage fabric but it is equally important to minimise regulation as far as conceivably possible so as to encourage and support owners to maintain heritage
- where regulation is proposed it is applied to the exteriors of buildings except in a limited number of cases where interiors are clearly identified for protection

Risks

- NZ Historic Places Trust and historical groups may oppose some of the listings as several items that are listed with NZHPT have been downgraded for protection either to Class C or no regulation is proposed. Where a downgrading or removal from the list is recommended this is because better quality items may have been discovered, the old HPT listed buildings possibly should not have been registered at all or an event has occurred such as relocation that has detrimentally affected values.
- The Inventory has been prepared within the budget and timescales allowed for by Council. It is our opinion that what has been prepared will more than meet the evidentiary requirements of the Environment Court.
- Criticism has been levelled at the process as the inventory preparation has been based on an external visual assessment, historical research and assessment based on international best practice. The brief did not require an internal building assessment. We consider that the RMA S5, S6 and S7 requirements are met with an external review. The Council would require both massive resources and time to undertake detailed internal surveys of every individual building. We do not believe that such expense can be warranted. There are also a number of issues around privacy where the examination of people's homes and businesses would be construed as being intrusive and in our opinion unlikely, in most cases, to extensively benefit heritage protection.
- The regulatory regime we have proposed below is more permissive than many District Plans. This approach has been adopted in order to attempt to encourage heritage protection in uncertain times. This is particularly vital for commercial buildings in and around the CBD where substantial loss of fabric could detrimentally affect the economic viability of the CBD or result in the creation of an area of substantially reduced amenity. Where possible we have attempted to use permitted, controlled or restricted discretionary activity classes. We are confident that a reasonably light approach can be justified in Court provided that the District Plan Chapter is extremely well written – standards and terms are unambiguous and protection is sought very specifically for the heritage component or value that is at risk. This approach may lead you to the Environment Court. If Council is concerned a blanket discretionary status could apply to all Class B and C items. This would avoid the risk of challenge by HPT but is likely to lead to a number of dissatisfied owners.

Class A Items

- The items recommended for listing in the District Plan as Class A are items that are nationally or internationally significant with high values. The majority of these items are already listed in the District Plan and the vast majority are registered as Category I or II Historic Places Trust items. The majority of these items are in Council or Institutional ownership. The protection of these items as Class A will facilitate applications to funding agencies for heritage protection works.

The regulatory regime suggested is the following:

- Either list as Non-complying or Discretionary activities. This means a complete and probably publicly notifiable resource consent will be required for demolition (non-complying meaning the effects must be minor or must meet the policy in the District Plan) and discretionary for alterations and additions.
- It is also recommended that 3 interiors be protected whereby any removal, damage or destruction of heritage fabric is considered discretionary. Heritage fabric will need to be clearly defined. All three buildings are institutionally owned.
- A Category of "Group" has been introduced as the context in which the buildings are located are as significant as the buildings themselves. The individual buildings within the group are protected, where specifically stated plus the area indicated is also protected. The rules around this will require discretionary consents for new structures that may impact on the values of the area. The rules will not apply to routine maintenance, landscaping, path laying, fencing etc.

Class B Items

The items recommended for listing are regionally significant. A number of these items are already listed in the District Plan, are HPT registered or are new items that deserve to be listed. A number of the items in the District Plan have been downgraded to Class C or not recommended for listing. A number of items previously not researched or recognised have now been elevated to Class B.

The regulatory regime suggested is the following:

- Demolition is recommended as a discretionary activity when public notification may be required. Tight policy needs to be written around this indicating the circumstances and criteria around which demolition will be evaluated.
- Internal alterations and additions are permitted. External alterations and additions are controlled activities with Council's control limited to the impact on heritage values, heritage fabric and amenity. These standards and terms will need to be very clearly spelled out. If the standards and terms cannot be met the application becomes discretionary. This means that applications who wish to undertake earthquake strengthening will be guaranteed to be granted consent in most cases. It is strongly recommended that "free resource consent processing" be continued.
- A Category of "Group" has been introduced as the context in which the buildings are located are as significant as the buildings themselves. The individual buildings within the group are protected, where specifically stated plus the area indicated is also protected. The rules around this will require controlled consents for new structures that may impact on the values of the area. The rules will not apply to routine maintenance, landscaping, path laying, fencing etc.
- Four interiors are protected of which two are private homes. Council may elect not to protect interiors of private dwellings. This should be discussed with the owners to determine whether this is appropriate.

Class C Items

Class C items are those items with lesser value either through relocation, major alteration or addition or are of local significance only.

The regulatory regime suggested is:

- Demolition is a controlled activity provided a full building record according to prescribed standards is provided.
- Alterations and additions are permitted activities

No Listing

These items are of historic interest but the values are not great enough to warrant listing in the District Plan.

Old Town Conservation Zone

In the Old Town Conservation Zone a number of specific buildings are listed as Class B. These buildings are described as Primary Buildings. There are also a number of buildings, that although not of the same value as the Class B buildings, make a contribution to the streetscape when read in conjunction with the Class B buildings. These buildings are called contributory. The Class B (Primary) buildings require a discretionary consent for demolition and the contributory buildings are restricted discretionary, with discretion limited to the effect of demolition on the streetscape and the effect on the heritage values of adjoining buildings.

Overall we recommend the retention of the Old Town Conservation Zone, with demolition of buildings which are neither primary or contributory being controlled, with the control limited to the design of the proposed replacement. A similar set of rules to those used for "display frontage streets" would enable Council to manage the streetscape.

Residential Buildings

A number of residential buildings are protected under the Operative District Plan. These buildings however tended to focus on "old" rather than representative. A residential survey has been undertaken with a view to protecting one or two examples of the best examples of particular styles and periods. These individual buildings will be listed as Class B. These buildings still require consultation with the owners prior to release.

A small number of residential precincts are recommended for protection. These precincts would result in demolition or relocation being a controlled activity with Council limiting its control to the replacement building. Alterations and additions to street facades would also be controlled.

Other Issues

Virginia Lake particularly from an archaeological perspective is of very high value. There are also a number of heritage items located within the Reserve area that are of interest or historic merit. We consider that the best means of managing Virginia Lake is not to protect individual items but rather for Council to manage the entire Reserve under a Reserve Management Plan. It is assumed that there is a Reserve Management Plan, at present, and this may need to be updated in the light of this study.