

Special General Meeting

A special general meeting was held on May 19, at which members present approved the motion put to the meeting. Minutes of the meeting are attached for your information.

HISTORICAL NOTE

There is, at this moment, a proposal before Wellington City Council to demolish the house at 35 Austin Street and replace it with 3 town houses. Liaison with the MVRA has alerted us to this, so we have done some research into the property. Consequently, the Committee believes there is a very strong case for opposing demolition of 35 Austin Street.

The house is very prominent on the site, in virtually its original exterior form. From the history, it is clear to see that it has strong associations with Mt Victoria's heritage which can be clearly documented. The associations are not only with an early immigrant and resident of the suburb but also with the working life, as Lamberg, who built the house, based part of his business on the hill.

It may be an aspect of the suburb's history which we could consider more publicly acknowledging in some way in future.

A Brief History of 35 Austin Street

The property at 35 Austin Street was originally part of Town Acre No. 361, granted to Geo. Moore in 1853. It was bought by Charles Lamberg in 1886.

The house at 35 Austin St today exists in virtually its original exterior form as shown on Thomas Ward's survey map of Wellington 1891, and was almost certainly constructed by Charles Lamberg in 1889.

The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, 1897 says of Charles Lamberg:

"General Contractor, Courtenay Place and Taranaki Street, Wellington. Mr Lamberg must be congratulated upon the success which has attended his energetic efforts in working the business up to its present lucrative position. He is a native of Sweden, arriving in this Colony in 1873, in the ship "Lamashauu", from Germany, and owing to his foreign extraction must have found it particularly difficult to make a start for himself in a new country. However, he managed to make himself independent of any assistance and now carries on a considerable contract business in the city. He is a large employer of labour, and owns no fewer than thirty-five horses, and an equal number of carts. The contracts are mainly for supplies of sand and gravel for the City Corporation, and for building purposes, but he undertakes any other kind of transport work and carting. Owing to his reliableness, Mr Lamberg obtains a considerable amount of work from builders and contractors, who are always ready to support him by employing his plant in connection with their undertakings."

In 1889 Wellington City Council awarded the contract for Scavenging and Street watering to Lamberg. Lamberg leased Town Belt reserve land on Mt Victoria to pasture the horses essential to his business. Correspondence between Lamberg and the Council between 1895 and 1902 provides considerable insight into the business of such contractors in the days of horse transport.

Charles Lamberg later built 8 other houses on Elizabeth St, between 1899 and 1902.

He died in early 1903.