



August 25, 2011

Cobham Drive to Buckle Street transport improvements  
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[sent via email to: info@witi.co.nz]

## Feedback on Roothing Proposals

### Mt Victoria Historical Society

Mt Victoria Historical Society (MVHS) is an incorporated society formed in 1996. Its aims are to research and share the history of the suburb of Mt Victoria and surrounding area, and to promote interest in, and preservation of, its unique heritage.

### General comments

This submission focuses on the impacts of NZTA's roading proposals on heritage. It is important to set these in the wider context, however, as the destruction of heritage is all the more indefensible given the dubious claims of value and lack of strategic vision of the overall project.

### Undemocratic Process

NZTA makes it very clear that it is seeking 'feedback' and that this is not a consultation process. We are concerned that there are, consequently, no legal principles governing this as a public consultation process. There is no legal requirement for NZTA to take into consideration public concerns on the impacts of its proposals and no ability for NZTA's proposals to be challenged at this point in the process. There is a lack of democracy in a situation where citizens and the local and regional councils cannot influence or challenge Roads of National Significance. MVHS believes that the roads that currently make up State Highway 1 through Wellington should be designated back to local roads and the citizens of Wellington should be participating in assessment of needs, formation of transport policy, and identification of solutions with the Regional and City Councils. The proposals also do not take sufficient account of Wellington City's strategic direction, including the *Toward 2040: Smart Green Wellington* strategy, for which there is considerable public support.

## Policy and Transport Plans

The Regional Transport Plan was informed by the Ngarauunga Gorge to Airport consultation. 80% of respondents did not want a flyover option for improvements to the Basin Reserve. This has been ignored, with Option A and B only offering an elevated bridge structure option. The proposals do not include the multi-modal approach that was the basis of the Land Transport Strategy. MVHS supports an approach which prioritises investigation of improvements to public transport, cycling and walking options before building more roading capacity.

MVHS believes that the majority of traffic to and from the eastern suburbs is local traffic. This is not a Road of National Significance but a local route for those accessing the city and the region. The airport is a local and regional asset that does not require massive roading infrastructure to support it. Mass transit for commuting, recreation and access to Wellington city is a more strategic, long-term solution for the environment and the economy, and would be more efficient in terms of movement and access for citizens. Taking further land for roading, as under the current proposals, is not a good use of scarce resources and would be detrimental to the Wellington's environment. The focus on creating more capacity for private car use is outdated and not forward thinking. It does not contribute to environmental, economic or social outcomes that should be the bottom line for any transport proposal. MVHS believes the effects on the local communities, the built urban environment and heritage are major and should be avoided. Even the NZTA acknowledges that impacts on heritage sites will be high<sup>1</sup>, although it has carried out only a superficial assessment of the heritage values of this area.

It is unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to continue to destroy and severely affect heritage and Wellington's built urban form for roading projects. Past roading projects have seen the loss of significant areas of Thorndon and the Bolton Street cemetery for the motorway, and the loss of heritage and urban built form of Te Aro for the Wellington Inner City Bypass. The current proposals are a continuation of the roading projects of the last 30 to 40 years and there is no justification for their implementation.

## Economic and social impacts

Many commentators have written knowledgably about the spurious economic claims made by NZTA for the project. (Furthermore, it can be almost guaranteed, on the basis of past projects, that costs will ultimately be considerably higher than predicted.) The loss of large amounts of land for future recreation, housing and business opportunities, to roading, in fact has huge impacts on health, the local and regional economy and social cohesion. Urban environments are complex and creative spaces that should be the heart of the economy. The joy of Wellington City and its surrounding suburbs is the constriction of its typography and the compact nature of the built urban form. This creates more opportunities for connectivity, especially if people are walking, cycling, interacting with the environment and each other. Built heritage and special inner city suburbs like Mount Victoria, Te Aro and Mount Cook contribute significantly to the city, its built urban form, its liveability and economy. Disruption to, or destruction of, these areas by major roads has far-reaching and detrimental impacts on the city and its people.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mt Victoria to Cobham Drive Study Technical Report – Environment, p 32*

Poor urban environment outcomes will be created by the current roading proposals. The loss of connectivity for pedestrians, residents and visitors to the many historic sites and heritage precincts and streetscapes will result in their being devalued, isolated and increasingly at risk in dead urban spaces.

## Impact of the NZTA proposals on heritage

Set out below is a summary of Mt Victoria Historical Society's concerns about the direct impact of the roading proposals on heritage. Additional supporting information is attached.

### Buckle and Tasman Streets

- The stretch of Buckle Street between Tasman and Taranaki Streets is an important military and penal precinct including the Defence General Headquarters (Category II historic place), the Mt Cook Police Barracks (Category II historic place), the Tasman Wall (Category I historic place) and the National War Memorial, Carillon and Old Museum Building (Category I historic places). There has been no assessment of the effects on the historic streetscape in the area of Tasman, Tory and Buckle Streets.
- The original alignment is to be disrupted, with the road further widened to three lanes and pushed closer to Mount Cook School. This creates a poor-quality pedestrian environment and does not allow for the appreciation of these significant heritage places.
- The proposed Memorial Park site is on land owned by the NZTA and not by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, who should be the custodians of any national Memorial Park. It is also inappropriate and disrespectful for a memorial park to be separated from its central memorial by a three-lane highway. Nor is a pedestrian-unfriendly thin green strip beside a highway a suitable place to site new monuments from other nations when the aim is to show respect for their contributions.

### Home of Compassion Crèche

- Flyover Options A and B both have a major effect on the Home of Compassion Crèche run by Mother Aubert. Option A removes it from its site and Option B retains it on-site but in isolation. Both options create poor outcomes for heritage values of the Crèche. MVHS opposes any option that relocates the Crèche building and believes a proposal that avoids relocation or isolation should be adopted.
- NZTA documents have also made errors in their research and documentation – for instance, the Crèche has a Category I registration from the NZ Historic Places Trust, not the lesser Category II registration they claim.

### Basin Reserve

- NZTA fails to adequately explain, or take into account, the significance of the Basin Reserve as a nationally significant site that has national and international recognition. The Basin Reserve is

Wellington's most iconic public recreation space and significant heritage precinct. The whole area is registered by the NZ Historic Places Trust. Its amenity and landscape values will be lost under the current roading proposals. MVHS opposes any plan for an elevated bridge structure, including both Options A and B.

- Options A and B will also result in the loss of the significant heritage boulevard views leading to and from the Basin Reserve, along Kent and Cambridge Terraces. In addition to the early presence of a boulevard, this uninterrupted connection with the Basin retains the significance of the Basin's link with the harbour via Waitangi Stream, an important determinant and feature in Wellington's development and history.

### Ellice and Dufferin Streets

- Historic buildings in lower Ellice Street will lose their heritage and amenity value and the historic streetscape of Ellice Street will be destroyed. The houses between 31 and 37 Ellice Street were all built to the same design in 1890 and 39 Ellice Street dates from 1876.
- The current roading plans will destroy a listed heritage tree (WCC heritage schedule: ref.204 - *Ulmus procera* English Elm), located in the grounds of the Catholic precinct on the corner of Dufferin and Paterson Streets.
- The visual impacts of an elevated bridge structure on St Joseph's Church will be major. The church is an architectural award winner, designed by Studio Pacific Architecture, and contains significant stained glass works which include a major piece by well-known Maori artist, Shane Cotton. It is our heritage of the future. It is also at the heart of the Te Aro Catholic community, forming part of a catholic precinct that includes buildings along Brougham and Ellice Street. The presence of the Catholic Church in the southern end of Mount Victoria has important historic links to the Buckle Street site of the Home of Compassion Crèche and the former Archbishop's residence at 7 Paterson Street.

### Construction of a second tunnel

MVHS believes that proposals for a second Mount Victoria tunnel and the widening of Ruahine and Wellington Street have not undergone the full assessment and analysis required for the public to understand the impacts of the proposals. There has been no publicly available assessment by NZTA of the heritage values in the affected area of Mt Victoria. MVHS has obtained a draft heritage assessment by Ian Bowman and Mary O'Keefe dated July 2011, which was not included in material presented to the public or made publicly available. It has clearly been commissioned too late to inform the design and the public participation process. MVHS seeks to have these projects shelved and to have them consulted on separately, at a future date, when all information can be released to the public to make full and informed submissions.

Specific concerns about these proposals are as follows:

- Construction of another Mount Victoria tunnel would result in the loss of the original housing on the southern boundary of the historically significant suburb of Mount Victoria. The original

town acres (No. 673 and 676) dating from the 1840 William Mein-Smith plan of Wellington City will be affected by the roading plans.

- The current roading plans will result in the total destruction of Paterson Street. Paterson Street was built as a private street by Harry Crump in 1900, and included acquiring part of the original College Reserve Town Belt land. Crump built all but four of the houses at the end of Brougham and along Paterson Street between 1901 and 1909. These are significant two-storey, Victorian villas built in timber. Any tunnel design should avoid Paterson Street.
- In addition, Wellington would lose 7 Paterson Street, built in 1869 for William Waring Taylor, after whom Waring Taylor Street is named. This is believed to be the earliest home of an early settlers 'elite' remaining in Wellington. Designed by Nicholas Marchant, it was also the home of the Catholic Archbishop of Wellington, Thomas O'Shea, and the Catholic Presbytery. It is one of the oldest homes in Mount Victoria and Wellington. The draft heritage assessment by Bowman and O'Keeffe (July 2011) has historical errors and inaccuracies. A referenced accurate history of Paterson Street and 7 Paterson Street by MVHS is attached.
- The Bowan & O'Keeffe assessment recommends heritage listing and relocation of 7 Paterson Street to the rear of the property. MVHS opposes any relocation and any design that impacts on the built heritage of Paterson Street.
- Ettrick Cottage, 19 Paterson Street, built between 1871 and 1874 and a Category II historic place, would also be lost under the current roading proposal.
- Up to 20 houses and apartments, including the whole of Paterson Street, parts of Brougham Street, Austin Street and Austin Terrace could be lost or severely affected by construction of another tunnel. These properties add to the diversity of Mount Victoria's built heritage and the urban form. The MVHS opposes any roading proposal that demolishes or relocates these buildings.

#### Widening of Ruahine Street

- There will be a loss of at least 1.6 hectares of Town Belt land. NZTA already has a designation allowing it to cut 25m into the Town Belt along Ruahine Street and seeks a further 10 m. The Town Belt is a gift to the people of Wellington in perpetuity – it was not given to the Wellington City Council or to the Government. Up to 50% of Town Belt land has already been eroded by development. It is a unique gift to the people of Wellington that should not be taken for roading purposes. MVHS opposes a designation for roading that takes Town Belt land.
- A full heritage assessment has not been carried out on the houses in Hataitai that will be affected by the roading proposals for widening Ruahine Street. The current plans for a shared slip lane and at least 6 lanes of traffic will have significant noise impacts, create more pollution, loss of land and amenity values.

## Wellington Road

- A full heritage assessment has not been carried out on the houses that will be destroyed for construction of the road. The Bowman and O’Keeffe assessment looks only at 39 Wellington Road as a house with local heritage significance and, even then, there are no plans to mitigate the effects of road widening on it.
- The built heritage form of the housing along Wellington Road contributes to the heritage of Hataitai and Kilbirnie. The loss of houses on both sides of Wellington Road will be detrimental to the character and urban form of these suburbs and to Wellington. Many of the houses are the original homes built on the sections that were developed in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Relocation of the Marist clubrooms on Kilbirnie Park will be required. This should be avoided and seems unnecessary when there is currently road space for four lanes.

## Flow on effects

Plans for the Basin Reserve roading project include closure of Ellice Street and Pirie Street in Mt Victoria. All traffic from southern Mt Victoria will then be forced to exit the suburb at Elizabeth Street. This will have a severe flow-on effect in the very-narrow, surrounding streets - namely Brougham Street, Porritt Avenue and Austin Streets – which in many places cannot accommodate two-way traffic now. This pressure, on streets of significant heritage value, will be compounded by buses which travel to and from Wellington East Girls College.

## Conclusion

Mt Victoria Historical Society does not believe that this project has been sufficiently well justified economically or in terms of strategic transport planning to compensate for the social, economic, environmental and heritage losses which will result.

If traffic improvements are required to cater for future growth south and east of the Basin Reserve we would urge consideration of a concept such as Option X prepared by the Architecture Centre. As they acknowledge, it requires further work, but it is much more aligned with Wellington’s ethos and strategic direction than the centrally imposed, inappropriate massive roading solution currently on the table.

On behalf of Mt Victoria Historical Society  
Joanna Newman  
Convenor

cc: Wellington City Council

Attachments:

- New Zealand Historic Places Trust Nomination for Registration of 7 Paterson Street
- Mt Victoria Historical Society's documentation in support of its Nomination for Registration of 7 Paterson Street
- Summary history of Paterson Street