



MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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Victorian Picnic

Sunday, March 24 at 2.30 pm

At the top of Mt Victoria, beside the lookout

Come dressed in Victorian costume, with a contribution to a Victorian afternoon tea.
Friends and families welcome.

(Cancelled if the weather is against us. If you feel a need to check, phone 027 7577 984.)

Heritage protection 101

New Zealand's heritage registration and protection mechanisms can often be confusing so we thought it might be helpful to give members a brief outline of the two main systems in place. "Brief", because the intention is not to go into the legislation, complexities or processes but to provide an outline from the perspective of how the two main systems impact on heritage preservation in Mt Victoria.

Firstly, there are the 'national' heritage provisions under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. This provides for what we often think of as 'historic places registrations' and there are a number of categories for registration of buildings and special categories for sites etc. The Basin Reserve is on the Heritage List as an Historic Site (for more, go to <http://www.heritage.org.nz/>). To become registered, a building or site goes through a fairly rigorous assessment process and there is a big processing backlog.

At the same time, Wellington City Council has heritage provisions under its District Plan and has its own Heritage Inventory (for more on this, go to <https://wellington.govt.nz/services/community-and-culture/heritage/wellingtons-historic-heritage-sites>). On the Inventory, for Mt Victoria there are currently 23 building entries (e.g. St Gerard's Monastery, Chest Hospital, 105 Brougham St, 68-72 Elizabeth St), 5 object listings (e.g. Queen Vic statue, Pirie Street bus tunnel) and 9 tree listings (2 of which have since been cut down). Entry on this list is relatively random, it is reviewed and updated very infrequently (as part of the District Plan process) and it can be hard to see why one building is on it and not another. (Another layer in the WCC District Plan are the provisions for 'Special Character Areas', of which there are several in Mt Victoria.)

Generally, there is no protection for Heritage New Zealand registered buildings or sites unless they are listed on the Council's District Plan. The Basin Reserve is in this situation: listed by Heritage New Zealand but not by the Council which has legislative responsibility for its preservation as a Reserve. Court battles have had to be mounted to save Category 1 buildings in Wellington.

There is absolutely no guaranteed protection for items on the Councils' District Plan, particularly if they are not also Heritage New Zealand registered. The Council has no powers to require owners to maintain buildings on its heritage inventory, is unlikely to contribute anything to their preservation and will not necessarily prevent alterations which damage their heritage values.

In such an environment, many questions arise and we're keen to hear from members. One question for instance, is:
Do you think that 'demolition by neglect' of historic dwellings in Mt Victoria is OK?

If you'd like to share your thoughts with us, you can contact us via our website form <http://mtvictoria.history.org.nz/> or email joneyman@xtra.co.nz.

Historical Note

No. 10 Queen Street

The house at 10 Queen Street threw up an intriguing find last year. Builders removing the roof discovered shingles beneath. This is a rare discovery, although not as unusual as one might think.*

Queen Street was initially formed as a short right-of-way from Brougham Street to give access to Town Acres 333 and 334, which were opened up for subdivision in 1873.

Land records show that Henry Farrar was given the Crown Grant for Town Acre 333 in 1854 and in 1857 he sold the land to Dennison Cochran, a law clerk. Cochran, who had the only house on Town Acre 333 for many years, began subdivision of the land in 1873, and the house was built at some point after that. Post-subdivision, Edward Tomlinson was the first person to own the property, in 1876. Rate books confirm that he built the house by early 1877. A photograph taken in 1878 shows a completed No.10 along with a number of recently built houses and others in the course of erection, some with shingled roofs. (Most of these houses still stand, in one form or another).

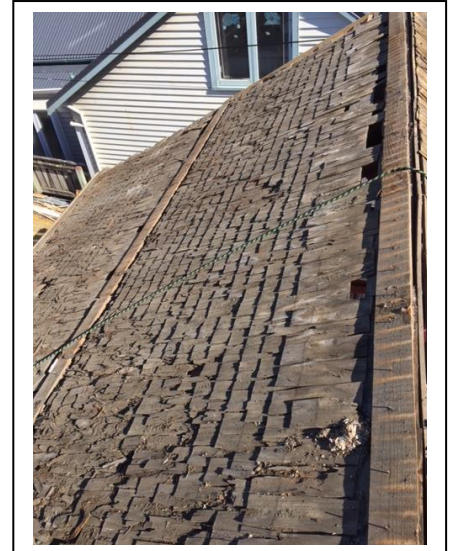
Corrugated iron was imported into New Zealand as early as 1843, but it was not in widespread use for several decades. By the 1870s its prevalence was such that the use of shingles, a cheap but not particularly durable form of roof cladding, was fast diminishing.

The original core of the house consisted of a T-shaped building with one gable parallel to the street and the other (on the east side) facing the street. Another gable, parallel to the street, was added to the front of the house in the 1920s. The shingles were only found on the original portion of the building. By 1891, the roof was clad in corrugated iron, so the shingles had already been covered by this time.

As for the property, it had working-class or lower middle-class owners and occupants for the majority of its history. It is noteworthy for the sheer number of changes of ownership over its life. The longest tenure was by James Mason, a tailor, who owned the property from 1879 to 1903.

By Michael Kelly, Historian and author of the WCC Mt Victoria Heritage Study Report

*William Waring Taylor's house at 7 Paterson St, built in 1869, also has the original shingles under its corrugated iron. [MVHS]



10 Queen St in 1878. (Part 1 of a 5-part panorama of Wellington City from Mount Victoria. (natlib.govt.nz:emu:PA1-o-041-1))