



# MT VICTORIA

## Historical Society News

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## The Ghosts of Business Past Guided Walk

Mt Victoria once contained many more businesses than it does today, often operating right next to residential houses, with practically no zoning requirements. This walk will take us past sites where businesses operated from 1939 through the mid-1970s, many of whose premises still stand.

The walk is not a historical account but based on the recollections of our guide and MVHS member, Colin Carr, who recalls Mt Victoria from as early as 1949.

**Sunday December 13 at 2.45 pm**  
Meet at the corner of Home and Pirie Street

The walk will take approx. 1 hour 20 minutes, rain or shine.



The site of  
AT Carr Ltd,  
among other  
historic businesses.

## Draft Spatial Plan

If you're following the media, there has been on-going discussion about planning for growth in Wellington, but things have quietened down a little as, I imagine, Wellington City Council digests the results of its consultation. Oral submissions are nearly over and, if you elected to follow up a written submission in person, we hope it went well.

We presented our petition with 752 signatures against the removal of the pre-1930s demolition rule to Councillor Nicola Young on October 28 with a small gathering of supporters in Elizabeth Street. Jo thanked Nicola for her stance in voting not to send the Draft Plan out for consultation and for her commitment to engaging with the community, and also the committee and supporters for their efforts in gathering signatures. Then Phil, as the driving force behind the petition, handed it over with the immortal words from the Joni Mitchell song, "you don't know what you've got till it's gone".



## The Hutchinson Ladies of Brougham Drive guided walk

On a mid-October Sunday afternoon, and perfectly timed between bouts of rain, Rosemary Bromley led a tour focused on the lives and places associated with Barbara Hutchinson and her three daughters. Rosemary's interest was triggered by Michael Kelly's article in an earlier newsletter, and the fact that she lives surrounded by their history.

The Hutchinson family arrived in Wellington in 1851 and in 1857 bought Town Acre 337 at the northern end of Brougham St. They lived in a cottage there and in 1858 purchased another four town acres bounded by Brougham and Austin Streets. After Walter died in 1864 Barbara set about providing for the family by selling portions of her land and building houses, which the family either lived in or rented out.



In 1874 she sold all the town acres, except TA 337, to William McIntosh Muir. He then subdivided the land, enabling the construction of Elizabeth St. None of the Hutchinson daughters married. After Barbara's death in 1896 Agnes took charge of the family's affairs. She had trained as a nurse, and in 1900 the sisters converted one of their houses into a private hospital. The photo above is taken outside 33 Brougham St and the building where this used to be. It also shows the private right-of-way Barbara created. Originally this was called Brougham Drive, but changed to Batham Drive in the 1960's to avoid confusion with Brougham St and was named after Miss Batham, the first principal of Wellington East Girls College. In 1905 the women moved from Mt Victoria to the fashionable seaside location of Seatoun, but maintained ownership of the hospital until 1945. Both Margaret and Agnes ended their days on Mt Victoria: Margaret in Moncrieff St in 1937, and Agnes in 1945 in the private hospital she had established decades before.

## Annual General Meeting

In September, we held our AGM. Colin Carr did not stand for re-election so we thank him for his work over the past couple of years. The remaining members of the committee were re-elected so for 2020-21 your Convenor is Jo Newman, Secretary, Jane O'Loughlin and committee members, Alan Olliver, Phil Kelliher and Rosemary Bromley. We do have vacancy for a Treasurer so, if you are interested, please don't hesitate to get in touch. It's not an onerous task!

## Memberships

We're nearly 6 months into our new financial year and thank all members who have renewed their subscriptions. If you haven't done so yet, we look forward to your renewing (feel free to contact us if you're not sure whether you have or not.)

## Mount Victoria and housing

In these times when housing is such a hot topic, it seems fitting to remember in our Historical Note the special part Mt Victoria has played in community housing in the past.

In 1981, too, inner-city house prices and rents were rising dramatically, beyond levels that low- or single-income families could afford. Many tenants were evicted as flats were converted into owner-occupied accommodation and renovated. Low income families were gradually being displaced from the inner city.

It also touches on the history of Crossways, the Mt Victoria Presbyterian Church focusing on social justice issues, whose story deserves telling in a future newsletter. (Incidentally, the former Crossways building at 46 Brougham Street – despite being on the Council's District Plan heritage list – is in an area which, in the Draft Spatial Plan, is zoned for demolition without resource consent and potential replacement with 6-storey apartment buildings.)

## Merry Christmas

This will be the last newsletter before Christmas, so we wish you all the best for the festive season. Let's be grateful that we'll be able to travel and gather with a free conscience!

The image to the right is from New Zealand Freelance, 26 December 1903, and shows Father Christmas arriving at "The Economic", a Wellington draper's store owned by Brougham Street resident Harry Kersley and his partner. The "Economic" is believed to be the first store in New Zealand to 'parade' their Father Christmas: two years later they invited local boys and girls to come and see 'Mother and Father Christmas' arrive at the railway station.





## Mount Victoria Housing Trust

The Mt Victoria Housing Trust was formed in October 1981 and grew out of the Inner City Ministry's involvement in housing and its concern at the growing scarcity and increasing cost of inner-city rental housing.

It was set up by three members of Crossways, the Mt Victoria Presbyterian Church, which had decided it was not enough to just voice concern and regret at the changing face of inner-city Wellington. Mt Victoria was described as being "an area which has strong community links and which has fought against pressures from commercial interests".

The first house bought was 60 Elizabeth Street, a two-bedroom, nineteenth-century house purchased for \$24,000, at the end of 1981 and completely renovated for approx \$50,000. A council architect drew up plans for renovations and community working bees assisted. By December 1981 it also owned 43 Brougham Street, a two-flat nineteenth century house bought for \$44,000.

Tenants automatically became members of the Housing Trust, which emphasised tenant liaison. It wanted to be more than a landlord: as well as providing affordable and secure long-term housing it hoped to support them in their everyday lives. It was also keen to develop a strong advocacy role, firstly by showing that old houses could be renovated and re-used for social housing and secondly by becoming active in public policy debate on housing issues.

The criteria for the first tenants at Elizabeth St were that they be receiving below average income, have a basic interest in the Trust, wanted a long-term tenancy, were a family or had dependants and were willing to maintain the garden. Rent was \$75 a week and in February 1983 a Samoan family with four children moved in.

The Trust changed its name to the Wellington Housing Trust in June 1982, signalling its intention to expand. It was still a neighbourhood-based organisation, however, with financial backing from the Housing Corporation and technical assistance from the Council.

In November 1984 it was offered the lease on a two-storey, two-flat property in Ellice St for 10 years, provided it covered rates, insurance and maintenance. Then, in 1987, it bought a five-flat house in Brougham St then, the following year, a three-flat house in Brougham St (one of these would be No.15.)

By the mid-1990's Mt Victoria was starting to become a more desirable place to live so the Trust decided to sell its now-valuable properties here to put itself on a sounder financial footing and buy in cheaper areas. There was a certain irony in this because the Trust had partly been founded to curb gentrification. The first property to be sold was 60 Elizabeth St and by 2007 all had been sold. It had also found that it could not afford to renovate 43 Brougham St when it came to sell it in 2006, so owning old properties was a problem.

