

Hearing 14: Historic Heritage

Opening Statement

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Introduction

1. I am a heritage consultant with over 30 years' experience in the field. I hold a PhD in architectural history from the University of Canterbury, am an experienced peer reviewer and expert witness, and a full member of ICOMOS New Zealand. I have undertaken the review of the built heritage schedules for the Thames-Coromandel, Waikato, Nelson, Waimakariri, Selwyn and Timaru district plans.
2. I commenced work on the WDC built heritage schedule in February 2016. The bulk of the heritage assessments undertaken for WDC were completed by May 2017. The review of the heritage schedule was predicated upon the preparation of a thematic historic overview of the district, as is best practice, and encompassed both the heritage schedules in the Franklin and Waikato operative district plans and potential 'new' heritage items arising from nominations and the identification of further items based upon the historic overview.
3. I devised the historic heritage item record form for use by WDC in respect of the assessment criteria included in the Waikato Regional Policy Statement. I also developed an assessment methodology for ranking highly significant and significant heritage items that drew upon that developed by Christchurch City Council for its replacement plan.
4. I am familiar with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014 and affirm that I have no conflicts of interest in regard to the historic heritage of Waikato District.

Overview

1. I tendered a report to Ms Morris outlining my response to the submissions and further submissions received by WDC on 10 April 2020. I tendered a report with regard to the former St Paul's Methodist Church (HCC submission 535.85) to Ms Connolly on 5 February 2020. My primary focus in both reports was the items included in Schedule 30.1 of the notified plan.
2. In addition to responding to the submissions and further submissions relating to Schedule 30.1, I also provided information and advice to Ms Morris on other matters, including the identification of heritage settings and the way in which the schedule review was undertaken.
3. In response to submissions and further submissions I met with Heritage NZPT staff and made a site visit to 'Clunes' house at Onewhero at the invitation of the owners.
4. As noted in my report dated 10 April 2020 I did not format Schedule 30.1, nor did I supply much of the information contained within the 'Physical Description and Significant Features' column. Ms Morris has recommended a revised format that will conform to best practice and provide clear and concise information for property owners, consenting planners and others. It is recommended that the historic heritage item record form for each scheduled item is linked to the e-plan at Schedule 30.1, as is becoming the standard approach for second and third generation plans around New Zealand.
5. As is generally the case, submissions in regard to Schedule 30.1 were largely concerned with inclusion or exclusion from the schedule. In some cases, the submitter appeared to be concerned about the implications of scheduling, rather than the scheduling per se (e.g. Dee Bond submission 946.1). While it is acknowledged that scheduling imposes some limitations on the owner of a heritage building or

structure, if they wish to demolish or make substantial alterations and additions to it, there are also incentives available at both the local and national level to help meet the costs of maintenance and, for example, seismic strengthening. It is quite common in my experience that submitters may oppose the scheduling of their property, not because they deny its heritage significance but because they are unsure as to what that will mean in a practical sense during the life of the district plan.

6. In some instances, the difference of opinion between myself and submitters hinges upon the distinction between historic heritage significance and character amenity values (e.g. 217.1 + subsequent submissions re 19 Bow Street). Although the RMA does not use the word 'significant' it is accepted best practice that historic heritage resources must demonstrate a level of significance sufficient to merit scheduling on a district plan. Character buildings, such as those at 11 and 19 Bow Street, Raglan and at 14 Galileo Street, Ngaruawahia, for example, do not warrant inclusion in Schedule 30.1, in my opinion, because they do not meet the criteria for heritage significance. In order for the heritage schedule as a whole to be robust, defensible and consistent it is important in my view that character buildings are not scheduled and thus subject to the objectives, policies and rules intended to protect historic heritage resources.
7. Several submitters requested that buildings excluded from Schedule 30.1 be reinstated (if they are currently scheduled in the operative plan) or added to it. In the case of the Heritage NZPT submission a number of items were proposed for consideration based upon a World War I and other wars research project undertaken by Heritage NZPT in 2015. All such submissions were carefully reviewed and any new or additional information provided by the submitter was considered in light of the assessment criteria. My recommendations are included in the s42A report; several of the HNZPT proposals (e.g. Kariaotahi Hall) had already been recommended for scheduling, whilst others (Whitikahu Hall and Memorial Gates) have now been recommended for addition.
8. There remain five items in contention between me and Ms Morris in her s42A report (11 & 19 Bow Street, Raglan, 14 Galileo Street, Ngaruawahia, and the Waikato Wars memorials in the Whatawhata and Ngaruawahia cemeteries). While I consider Ms Morris's 'conservative approach' to recommending scheduling of these items is a reasonable one, I have not changed my opinion that there is insufficient evidence to support inclusion of any of these items in Schedule 30.1.
9. A number of submissions and further submission were made in regard to the identification of heritage areas and their management by way of design guidance. If they are to be protected under s6(f) of the RMA, such areas need to meet the same criteria for scheduling as an individual building or structure. In the case of Rangiriri there is insufficient evidence to support a heritage area or precinct; hence my recommendation that a village design guide be developed in future.

Conclusion

1. I reviewed all assessments where the submitter provided additional information and stand by my assessments and the rankings of each item. I consider that the schedule I recommended to WDC was robust and consistent and note that the peer review report provided to WDC by Archifact Ltd (June 2018) affirmed the sufficiency of the heritage item reports to support scheduling, and item ranking, in the PDP.