

**National Heritage Planners Forum Minutes**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007 Auckland Regional Council**

**Introduction: Concerns regarding archaeological protection/maintenance raised by George Farrent**

**Discussion:**

- Government may be changing regulations to make TLAs responsible to Archaeological sites – what effect will this have?
- Currently the Historic Places Trust (HPT) and TLAs are co-regulators, however the handover of all responsibility to TLAs. This may be rapid if the new council structures across the region change.
- If the government wants to make these changes, will it need to supply funding to TLAs for the upkeep and protection of historical sites? The fear is that many small TLAs will not have the funding to protect/maintain their Archaeological sites – the sites will be a burden to the councils particularly those that are predominantly rural.
- This leaves HPT with only information and education roles, while all regulatory power lies with the TLAs.
- Who should really be responsible? –TLAs? HPT?
- When is the change likely to happen?
- The problem local TLAs face is that they often don't have the expertise in council to be responsible for the historic sites. They don't have the ability to assess sites and they can't afford to pay a professional to do the work. TLAs need some new advocacy efforts to get the resources they need.
- Rural areas becoming urbanised also creates more problems when assessment of archaeological sites is required. It may not be likely that rural areas will get more funding from government.

**Presentation 1: Duane Burt (ARC) – Heritage Landscapes at Risk – current examples in the Auckland Region.**

Archaeological sites in Auckland are under threat – several case studies highlighting what is being done to protect them.

**Weiti Development Area:**

150 houses are proposed to be built at Weiti. Developers want to change the district plan to develop more of the area.

There is conflict around development of coastal land, as the coast is an important area for archaeological and ecological values, however also has significant development value.

Most of the archaeological sites are situated where the developers want to build – even though the information on archaeological sites has been available prior to creating a development proposal.

The proposed subdivision at Weiti is planned on an area with the one of the highest concentrations of recorded archaeological sites in the region. Weiti has been inhabited by Maori for centuries and was a good area for shark fishing, the landscape is scattered with different kinds of sites, such as middens, pa, gardening and food storage, and living areas.

The development plan proposed to destroy a few sites, bury some and make a lake over some, however their assessment of impact was based on quantitative values of the number of sites, not on the qualitative value of each site.

The developers had changed designs to the hay-paddock plan to avoid archaeological sites and protect them, however they proposed to do this by completely changing the landscape – creating a lake for aesthetic purposes. Only the extent of midden sites had been identified on the development plans and consideration had not been given to the interrelationships of sites or subsurface archaeological features that may be more difficult to determine during archaeological assessment.

A basic problem is that the places where people historically chose to live are usually the prime areas of the landscape where people currently want to live so it is difficult to protect archaeological sites from development, when they are often the most desirable areas to develop.

The ARC argued for the removal of 15 lots in high density, and leaving the hay paddock alone. DoC and HPT were concerned with the plans, but would not support ARC's proposal in court. Iwi were mostly supportive of the development plan.

The court hearing is still being processed and the final decision has not yet been made.

This example illustrates the danger of district plans being designed by the development process, particularly regarding zoning for these kinds of developments. Rodney District Council had no heritage advice and relied on our advice, but they basically said that the development should be approved. Had the developers approached our team first and found out about the archaeological sites and discussed the issues before creating a proposal, it might have mitigated some of the conflict of interest encountered in the court hearing.

Questions are still open as to whether we value landscapes for their own general features. The lake/wetland example was proposed for aesthetic reasons, however in our estimation it would not benefit local ecology or protect the natural and cultural heritage.

### **Long Bay Development Area:**

Environment Court 1990s with regard to how the area should be developed.

Landco proposed 2000 houses, North Shore City Council proposed 1400 houses. Most of the archaeological and cultural heritage sites are in the south east corner and Landco proposed to protect 10% of it. The area has a long history of Maori and European

settlement and habitation, with numerous recorded archaeological sites including middens, living and gardening terraces, historic ditch and bank features.

North Shore City Council had a large “protection zone” but still allowed development within certain areas which the ARC argued required greater protection.

ARC planners suggested that houses be built up on the ridges, and land which had significant cultural heritage sites be owned in common – which was the fields below the ridges. In this way the cultural heritage sites would be protected, as well as the views out to the ocean from the houses, because house owners would share common ownership of the protected heritage land.

Iwi were split between support for ARC and support for Landco.

The outcome is that there will be a heritage protection zone. We are optimistic that this will be successful; however it took a lot of hard work and allocation of resources to ensure that we had the best case.

### **Hobsonville Airbase Development Area:**

A major growth area was proposed and a new motorway to link the West with the North is underway in Hobsonville.

The historic airbase development has been led by housing NZ as a flagship of sustainability project based on sustainable development practices. The historic airbase and airport are to be developed, however the use of the land called “Bomb Point” is yet to be decided.

A few issues arose with the development – most buildings will be protected, including the Maori quarters and the single men’s quarters and St Marks Chapel, which date from the 1920’s -1930’s, they have been moved off site to south Auckland so that the army can continue to use them. Even though they had local significance to Hobsonville, they still belonged to the army, so the army was able to move them within the Auckland region.

Neville St and Sutherland St will also both be protected. The site included a number of buildings and storage structures and some toxic sites.

Bomb point was the old bomb storage area and has a number of earthworks relating to that history. It has great potential for an open space recreation area, it also has green space and ecological values, however it also has the best retail potential for coastal property development.

Fortunately the latest development plans show bomb point as a park area.

Lessons we can learn from these examples – we can protect landscapes, however it is hard work and essentially requires clear communication with developers and support from other groups and TLA’s.

All cases have been more about advocacy for the sites, than about regulatory powers.

All we can do is line things up for the courts, they have the final decision.  
This is a “late stage” method of action. Early contact with councils and developers would be ideal.

Also the important issue of recognition of the value of landscapes in general – should we consider the effectiveness of managing verses actively protecting our cultural landscapes?

### **Presentation 2: Debbie Hogan & Jane McLeod (DCC) – Economic Re-use of Dunedin’s Heritage Buildings.**

This information was gathered from discussion with property developers and others for a project assessing the Economic Re-use of Dunedin’s Heritage Buildings.

Current Issues – Economic Factors (low returns, lack of demand, leasehold land, and restricted market opportunities), costs of complying with building act 2004, district plan requirements and Experiences with City planning and building control staff/ processes – indicate that it is difficult for property developers to re-use heritage buildings.

Rental prices are too low, rent needs to increase, but this is not happening at the moment. Developers need to gain enough rent to make it worthwhile to renovate. Also when properties are on leasehold land, there is less incentive to renovate. The economic return is not high enough, the increase in rates does not match the increase in rent.

Example – the post office building was proposed to add several new floors on top of it, however the proposal revealed conflicts with the district plan, local demand and the Historic Places Trust in terms of what goals/changes were wanted. It has been suggested that since there is the need for new economic development, the blanket approach district plan needs to change.

The Building act also increases costs – often historic buildings need to be made safer to meet the new standards if they are to be renovated. All buildings pre 1930’s need to be assessed and reinforced, which in many cases would cost more than the worth of the building. Re-zoning for car parks and height restrictions in the city also needs to be looked at.

Often consents take too long to process and advice given from council is inconsistent – often due to a high staff turnover, and a difference in senior vs. new staff knowledge of the system.

Lessons Learnt – Economics (land tenure), Building Type (warehouse), Institutional/process matters (hand holding), partnership, think projects/implementation and pick winners (Bond/Vogel Sts)

There was a need to get a staff group together. Developers need to know the process to apply, and DCC needs to try to improve their initial process (perhaps get someone from HPT to help with initial development discussions). DCC doesn't have a dedicated heritage planner or unit and so there is a need for an advisor to assist planners through the process

Next Steps – Internal staff discussions re process improvements, pick winners?  
Workshop with individuals, organisations, developers, professionals in early 2008.

Economic Re-use of Dunedin's Heritage Buildings – Study methodology

14 semi-structured interviews carried out by Opus. Property developers, owners etc asked about their own experiences. Questions concerned constraints and opportunities for redevelopment.

The plan is to give more importance to Heritage. This study is within the context of the Heritage Strategy and encourages adaptive re-use of buildings. Questions focused on what can be done and what constraints are there?

Past Trends – buildings bought cheaply then redeveloped (past 10 years). Decrease in availability of office space in the city centre.

The Economy is growing and there is increasing demand for office buildings. How can we help developers to re-use heritage buildings?

Supply better guidance, change building act and district plan? It is not possible to “cut corners” on restrictions for health and safety – seismic earthquake risks, disability access etc have to be included. However, engineers need to understand heritage.

Picking winners – companies able to complete the redevelopment should be helped and encouraged by council.

The next step is for work shops and meetings with public and other professionals.

Philamore has a company website and gives examples of the benefits of restoring heritage buildings.

Finally, we need to encourage developers to contact council very early in the process – possibly before land/ building is purchased.

### **Presentation 3: Neil Carrie (CCC) - Leading a discussion on Regional Policy Statements and District Plans.**

- Concerns – example: Environment Canterbury is not integrating district plan and management and regulating the process well.

- What does ARC do? – ARC has a Heritage Team – 5 staff in Cultural Heritage and 6 staff in Natural Heritage. Staff have a wide range of skills. The basic tools used are the Cultural Heritage Inventory (CHI) with about 15,000 cultural heritage sites recorded for the Auckland Region from a variety of sources – about 9000 from the New Zealand Archaeological Association. The CHI has a spatial component and all sites are plotted in the ARC's GIS and on the intranet mapping system enabling all staff to access this information.
- Can we make predictions of effect based on our system?
- Most councils are not well equipped to deal with cultural heritage issues. ARC and Environment Bay of Plenty are examples of councils with in house expertise, most councils have to hire contractors when needed.
- There is the problem with the need for regional policies which can be used across all regions, and then the conflict of separate needs for separate areas – even smaller than land within TLA's. New criteria for what is really important need to be developed.
- The Auckland policy sets out what is important from an Auckland regional perspective. Inevitably TLA's control the subdivision of land, so they have to balance what is allowed.
- Do we need greater policy coherence between hierarchies, regional authorities and TLA's? How do we work better to get better results for heritage? Do regional councils talk to each other about heritage policy? Policy needs to be varied enough to accommodate the cultural heritage differences for different areas with the TLA's. Local context needs to be kept in mind when policy is being written. Public openly want more recognition of cultural heritage and the RMA recognises this need too.
- Do we need to rationalise the “nature” (definition) of what heritage is, sharpen the concept up, as there is a lack of coherency as to what constitutes heritage?
- Have regional councils offloaded their responsibilities to HPT?
- The NZHPT Register is inadequate in terms of archaeological and wahi tapu sites. We can't rely on the Register for our research and documentation and assessment of significance. We need to have more precise policy assessment criteria, and policy needs to recognise how the tiers of authorities work.
- What would be useful for Auckland City? How could RPS help Auckland City Council? Regional Policy Statements can be used as a valuable check point, which remind us to be complete in our approach to assessing a situation. They can be used as a guide, a rule, to help stop us from making mistakes and to keep

everything covered from all perspectives, to make sure we do not miss or ignore anything, while at the same time ensuring that we do not overlap in our processes.

- Ground level people need to dictate to MfE what we need. Heritage advocates at a local level can voice what they think is important.
- ARC is fortunate as we have broad skills within our heritage team, our RPS is broad and TLA's can use it effectively. Are we an exception? What do other areas of NZ need for their Heritage? Can ARC help?

#### **Presentation 4: George Farrent (ACC) – Update National Policy Statement, MfE Road show.**

- The road show consisted of workshops and forums around the country discussing topics such as where we are heading. Sometimes the answers and issues would be completely different depending on scale and locality – for example, issues at the national level verses issues faced by the West Coast.
- Reports are going to be used from the road show when drafting the new NPS, however this will take a few years.
- There was less feedback from cities. Are urban problems similar everywhere? TLA's, regional authorities and consultants in the field of heritage were involved. There were some learning curves – though we tried to invite all people in related fields, obviously many still missed out.
- Issues discussed included rates relief and suspensory grants as incentives to help people do work which benefits heritage. Compensating property developers and owners where necessary, rates holidays, emergency purchase, contingency funds etc could be used, because it is hard to force people to spend money on heritage. Sometimes we absorb the consent fee.
- The ARC has the Environmental Initiatives Fund (EIF), which helps local owners/community groups to care for their environment. For example, a new roof for a community hall, fencing an urupa or cultural heritage site etc. most of the applications we get are for natural heritage projects, cultural heritage only has 10-15 applicants a year and the average grant is less than \$5000. The total fund is about \$600,000. This year \$40,000 was given to cultural heritage. People can apply year after year, there is no cut off. It might be better if we could pay a larger lump sum for 1 year. No grants over \$10,000. Honda is a sponsor of the fund.
- Dunedin Heritage Fund about \$300,000 operated by council and HPT. Uptake not great because criteria are very difficult to achieve. It is a low interest loan.

- Waitakere City Council has a \$100,000 fund – started this year for Heritage, Marae, and Museums. The Maximum grant which can be given is \$10,000.
- Greater Wellington does not have much cultural heritage funding. They get some Honda and QE2 covenants for ecologically significant areas, however they need more Heritage personal and expertise to be able to apply for funding for heritage issues.

**General Business:**

Allan Jollith – organising a David Young seminar for March. Heritage training HPT bough D. Young to Christchurch the year before to teach about heritage management and heritage sites. Heritage training is generally lacking in NZ – and we need to pressure local universities to increase specialisations in this area, or simply by adding heritage training to other courses in relevant fields.