

DEVONPORT HERITAGE

A SAD DAY FOR THE MASONIC

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DEVONPORT
HERITAGE
— INCORPORATED —

We're on the Web:
[http://devonportheritage.org
/index.html](http://devonportheritage.org/index.html)

The Council's decision to grant consent for the Masonic apartment development is a terrible blow to heritage protection in Auckland.

The planning commissioners ignored the concerns of 300 people and several major organizations, and gave the go-ahead for developer Peter Thwaites of Redback Developments to proceed with his proposal for ten apartments on the King Edward Parade site. This will result in the partial demolition of the 1866 hotel.

Devonport Heritage along with the Historic Places Trust, The Auckland Regional Council, the Masonic Friendly Society and the Volcanic Cones Society called for the application to be declined or aspects of it changed, because of the effects on the heritage value of this 144 year old hotel.

Devonport Heritage called for all of the hotel to be retained and not just the facade as proposed, and that the street-front apartments be set back to allow the Masonic to continue as the dominant building on the site.

We and the Historic Places Trust believe the planned 'restoration' will mean that most of the hotel will be demolished beyond recognition.

The Masonic Friendly Society and a huge number of individuals argued strongly for the retention of the pub, and neighbours wanted changes to the proposal's infringements on their properties and safety aspects improved.

But the commissioners ignored all these submissions and virtually granted the developer everything he wanted.

We are hugely disappointed and stunned by the decision. The council commissioners have ignored the intent of the District Plan's heritage

provisions and dismissed the reports of their own heritage specialists, who all criticised the calibre of the planned restoration of the Masonic.

What this proposal will mean is that the Masonic will be largely demolished. Part of the ground floor on the King Edward Parade will remain and the façade of the Church Street side will be retained, but the roof, the rear, the north side and the heart of the building will be demolished.



This is not heritage protection, it is facadism and it is an appalling way to treat a historic building that has sat on this site for 144 years.

The old Boarding House, which is even older than the Masonic, is equally badly treated. It is moved to the rear, hoisted up several metres to sit above the entrance to the underground car-park.

Devonport Heritage will seriously consider appealing this decision to the Environment Court. We are not alone in thinking that this flawed decision is a backward step for heritage protection in New Zealand.

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Heritage

In order to pay for, amongst other things, the campaigning work we do, Devonport Heritage committee has reluctantly agreed to the introduction of an annual subscription. The fee is \$10 per household each year and if you did not pay in January then now is a good time to do this.

Each year we email and post mail (to those who have no email) our members on various issues and occasions. We will continue to do this, and in addition, we intend:

- to produce newsletters each year to keep you informed,
- to continue to keep all of you informed via our website.
- To welcome you to our regular monthly meetings, held on the last Wednesday of each month between February and November. These are held in Devonport library's Meeting Room.

Please support us by sending a cheque for \$10 made out to Devonport Heritage Inc, and addressed to:
Membership Secretary,
Claudia Page,
Devonport Heritage,
PO Box 3244
Devonport Post Office.

Thank you for your continued support.



EDITORIAL

BY CHAIRPERSON OF DEVONPORT HERITAGE, MARGOT MCRAE

Many Aucklanders are in uproar over the reorganisation of local government in Auckland. First the Royal Commission report came out with the expected one regional Auckland council and six councils, then the Government stepped in and got rid of the six councils.

This led to much gnashing of teeth by some mayors and councillors who arrogantly believe that without them we won't have democracy in Auckland.

They seem to have missed the point that Auckland's reorganization is about getting rid of them and the destructive bickering and petty politicking they have inflicted on Auckland local government for years.

In our enthusiasm to get rid of these fools and buffoons, many of us have applauded the Government's decision to go for 20-30 community boards instead of the six councils.

However the speed with which the Government has thrown out the Royal Commission's findings is disturbing.

You get the feeling that it may have been done to give a semblance of local representation while in fact what we will get is a huge unwieldily mega bureaucracy. Meanwhile, real grassroots democracy will go to the dogs (Community boards get dog control powers!).

The latest tantrums by the mayors simply demonstrate what so many of us at the grassroots have come to despise about our present system. It's led to eight fiefdoms full of well-paid councillors and mayors and a financial culture that results when people spend money that's not their own.

While many councillors work hard out of a genuine concern for their communities, there are too many time-servers who delight in personality

conflicts and trivial politics.

Of course there will be politics on the new regional council and probably profligate spending at times, but at least it won't be duplicated eight times as it is at present. Quantity of representation does not equate with quality.

By contrast community boards, with their much poorer remuneration and status, usually attract people who are motivated by genuine concerns for their community and not by hopes of a job for their retirement, free lunches and maybe a trip a sister city.

Many of us at first welcomed the Government's decision to do-away with the Royal Commission's plan for six local councils. These appeared to be a watered-down repeat of the present system, but not numerous enough to be truly representative. However it's essential, if the proposed community board system is to work, that the boards are given real power. If not they will be nothing more than parish-pump groups waiting for the crumbs to fall from the big table.

Firstly, the proposed community boards must reflect present communities of interest, even if slightly enlarged. For example Devonport and Takapuna could be combined into one board.

Secondly they must have real responsibilities, powers and independence from the new Auckland Council. There needs to be strong lines of communication and accountability imbedded in the relationship between boards and the Auckland Council, and most importantly, a respect for the boards that is written into their charter.

What is also crucial is for resource consent processes to be delegated to, and run by, the boards.

The proposed one district

plan for Auckland, in reality, will have to be made up of sub-plans based on the existing district plans.

These planning rules have been developed over many years to reflect the distinct landscapes, history and needs of different areas and no one can seriously be proposing to throw them out. We in Devonport Heritage will vigorously oppose any attempts to dilute the heritage zoning we have fought so long and hard for.

Planning rules are the coal-face of local representation. They are the means by which communities can decide how their area will look and how developments will reflect their needs.

Every community board should have specialist staff dealing with resource consents for their area and board members must continue to be involved in decision-making.

This is the only way that Auckland will be able to retain and enhance the widely different characters of our communities.

There is still a huge amount of thought and hard work needed to sort out the proposed new system for Auckland.

Lets hope the man who transformed himself by participating in Dancing with the Stars can manage the same sort of remodelling of Auckland. If not it will be a disaster for us all.

36 KING EDWARD PARADE

The Council is continuing to monitor the work to restore 36 King Edward Parade to a more original condition.

The owner of this building, architect Wayne Lees, removed wooden windows and other heritage features without appropriate consents several years ago.

At a reconvened resource consent hearing in 2007, he agreed to remove the aluminum windows and restore many of the original features.

The Council has informed us that Mr Lees is currently seeking quotations for the approved replacement of the ground floor joinery and has recently indicated his intention to complete the work within the specified time-frames in his consent.

An indicative programme of works and

(cont on p4)

VICTORIA WHARF

The dear old Victoria Wharf was closed to traffic in December 2007. The eighty year old steel reinforced concrete wharf was in such a state of disrepair traffic could no longer use it. The Council ordered an engineering investigation to establish whether it should be repaired or demolished. The report came in July 2008 and it has now been decided to demolish.

Built in 1928 to replace the original 1869 wharf it was especially designed for vehicular ferries. The new wharf was a response to the popularity of motor car travel – it was fitted with the an electric gangway which lowered to the deck of especially built vehicular ferry. Cars queued down the wharf and along King Edward Parade waiting to get on the ferry. All transport from the north came through Devonport – the alternative was around the top of the harbour at Riverhead – and local businesses benefited greatly from this influx. It was not only the private car but the trucks that transported goods that found the great

advantage in using the new wharf. However, when the Auckland Harbour Bridge opened in May 1959, the vehicular ferry ceased – and the wharf no longer enjoyed its important role in the life of the community.

Since then the wharf has been a favourite fishing and whitebaiting platform, an ideal harbour viewing place and provided parking for over 40 vehicles.

Early in 1995 a proposal by Auckland Regional Council to build on the wharf including over

the water between Devonport wharf and Victoria wharf was strongly opposed by Devonport residents. The plan allowed building of retail and apartments to the height of 9m with a further 4m for chimneys and lift machinery. Devonport Heritage Chair Trish Joughin said at the time, 'the most frightening aspect is the fact that any development would be non-notifiable'. Thank goodness reason prevailed.

Devonport Heritage Inc. believes that Victoria wharf should be repaired and

retained.

It has a place in the cultural and social history of Devonport. Unfortunately it is not listed on the Auckland Regional Plan for Cultural Heritage Sites and has no protection. We have been informed that the funds that have been allocated to demolish the structure cannot be used for repair!! We intend to do further research and present the Council with a reasoned case for retention of this Devonport landmark.



NORTH SHORE COUNCIL'S HERITAGE STRATEGY

Devonport Heritage has been asked to give its opinion of the North Shore City Council's draft Heritage Strategy.

This Strategy is intended to set out a more integrated, coherent approach to heritage and was written after consultation with the community.

The 57 page document is a thorough examination of how heritage management can be improved and suggests three action plans on protection, education and integration of heritage matters.

While supporting such long-term heritage initiatives on the North Shore may seem futile in the light of the massive local government changes now proposed, we still

believe that anything that may get underway now could give us much-needed ammunition in the future.

So we have endorsed the Strategy and in addition have called for urgent attention and staff resources to be given to upgrading the Council's heritage schedule of listed buildings.

We have also suggested that work be continued on a plan change to protect heritage buildings in business zones, to avoid a repeat of demolition consents being granted for historic shops like 89 Vauxhall Road.

We supported the goals of introducing financial incentives for owners of heritage buildings and of an investigation into a heritage acquisition fund.

The Strategy contains several suggestions under the banner of education and while these are laudable we believe they should not be a priority until much more has been achieved to protect heritage.

The Strategy's Integration Action Plan admits there has been a lack of coordination between Council departments and a lack of clarity around heritage roles and responsibilities.

As we know this has led to a series of blunders in Devonport that have seen heritage houses demolished and these must be prevented in the future.

Therefore we support the actions that will see professional development for

council staff on heritage matters and an in-house forum on heritage management services.

We also support the employment of a full-time heritage co-ordinator which would be a positive step, but suggested his or her duties should include liaising with council staff on heritage as well as with external groups.

There will be a chance for the public to have a say on the Strategy in May/June and we urge our supporters to take this chance to shape heritage practices which may be carried over to any new council that's in store for us.

CHANGES TO THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

Devonport Heritage added its voice to submissions on the Government's proposed changes to the Resource Management Act.

We oppose several of the clauses of the RMA Amendment Bill which we believe could have a detrimental effect on heritage protection in New Zealand.

We believe some clauses of the Bill may lessen councils' commitment to heritage rules and make it harder for community groups to fight for the protection of our built heritage.

Thus:

- We oppose removing the **non-complying status** from district plans because it indicates there are activities that require a higher standard of control. For example the demolition of a Category A heritage building is non-complying and this sends out a strong signal that such buildings should be retained.

Also the costs and time involved in changing all district plans to remove this category would be self-defeating especially since the aim of the Bill is to streamline and reduce costs.

- We are opposed to the changes that will make **non-notification of resource consents** the norm because we believe it subtly signals that the public has no intrinsic right to be involved in a resource consent process.

It will further weaken the ability of the public to be involved in decisions that will affect their communities.

- We believe the current situation is working well enough and there is no need for it to be changed. We submitted that the clause requiring **security of costs** to the Environment Court may further deter public interests groups from participating in Environmental Court appeals.

This may well be the objective of this clause and if so it against the spirit of the Act.

Many small and under-resourced groups like Devonport Heritage are already reluctant to appeal to the Environment Court because of the costs.

- We opposed the clause which removes the **ability to join proceedings under S274** of the RMA, as we believe this will remove the ability of community interest groups to become a party to an appeal even though they may be requested to by an original submitter.

With partial notification becoming more common, groups like Devonport Heritage may be requested at a later date to be party to an appeal, but this clause will prevent us from doing so. Therefore it will prevent us responding to community concern over a development. Devonport Heritage also opposed the removal of blanket tree protection.

- We maintain that trees make an important contribution to heritage suburbs like Devonport, and the removal of blanket protection will enable them to easily removed.

This will have a hugely detrimental effect on the streetscape and amenity values of heritage suburbs where old trees are linked to the historic make-up of the area. In coastal communities like Devonport it is also essential to retain controls over the removal of coastal Pohutakawas.

To rely on retaining only those trees that have individual protection would give Councils the unmanageable burden of listing thousands of important trees.

There will be Parliamentary select committee hearings later in the year and we have requested the opportunity to speak to our concerns.

DEMOLITION FOR 24 VICTORIA ROAD

The heritage house at 24 Victoria Road will be demolished.

Council planning commissioners approved the application to demolish the house and replace it with a 2 level commercial building last month.

Unlike all pre-1940 houses in Devonport's Residential 3 zone, the 1873 house was not protected because it is in a business zone.

All of the larger old commercial buildings in Victoria Street however are listed on the Council's schedule of protected buildings and so are safe from demolition.

The old house at 24 Victoria Road is

the last reminder of how the main street used to look with residential houses and small businesses on the eastern side.

Although it will be replaced with a neat and tidy, bland new building, Devonport will lose another precious artifact from its past. With some imagination and vision the old house could be transformed into something special.

The consent is for 3 to 5 years and there is no date yet for demolition.

We can only hope that in the present economic climate and with a glut of commercial space in Devonport, there may still be time for a reprieve.

Devonport Heritage Committee Members 2009

- Chairperson** Margot Mcrae
- Vice Chair** Trish Deans
- Secretary** Susan Yoffe
- Membership** Claudia Page
- Treasurer** Sylvia Emm
- Publicity** Ann Allen
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(36 King Edward Parade cont.)
conservation plan submitted with his application suggested that this part of the work may have been completed as early as February 2009. However that was only indicative and

he has (under his consent conditions) until August 2010 in which to complete that part of the work and a further period in which to complete other aspects of the restoration work leading to full completion within 5 years of the date

of consent ie August 2012. The Council says its Heritage Planner and area Monitoring Officer are continuing to monitor the situation to ensure that the conditions of resource consent

are fully complied with within the requisite time-frames. Rest assured we will be monitoring the Council to ensure the vandalism of a scheduled heritage building will one day be remedied.