

INTRODUCTION

Wellington's historic commercial, ecclesiastical, industrial and residential buildings and structures – including its timber houses – are a precious and finite resource. They are important in shaping the character of the central city and each of the suburbs, and are part of what makes Wellington unique. Protection and use of the city's built heritage resources are fundamental to the sustainable management of Wellington's natural and physical resources. Recognising and acknowledging the importance of the past also contributes to the community's understanding and awareness of a sense of place. This has been recognised in the *Wellington City Council Sense of Place Strategy*. In this strategy, the Council's goal for Wellington is quality of life, growth and prosperity. In striving for this goal, the Council wants to ensure that what makes Wellington special is preserved. Our historic buildings are a physical representation of our sense of place, and their preservation is essential if this is to be maintained.

In preparing the Sense of Place Strategy, research was undertaken to determine what Wellingtonians treasure about their city, and what gives the city its unique character or essence. From the range of factors identified, the following are relevant to the Built Heritage Policy:

- the compact and integrated urban layout
- the pivotal role – and diverse and vibrant character – of the central city
- the distinct character of communities, neighbourhoods, urban quarters and suburban centres – people and buildings – and the city's confident, unpretentious personality, and
- the symbols, images, places and buildings that identify the people of Te Whanganui-a-Tara and Wellington city, and tell their history.

The Council will work to ensure that all new growth respects these values and, if possible, enhances them.

Built heritage includes: an individual or group of buildings, structures, monuments, or installations, or remains thereof, and their surroundings which are associated with the city's architectural, cultural, social, political, economic, scientific, technological, transportation, military or maritime history.

Conserving built heritage is an integral component of a 'creative city' because it demonstrates how much the city values the diversity of its environment.

It provides a sympathetic human scale and form to the urban environment, and enhances the well-being of its citizens. It can also make a significant contribution to the economy, through employment, tourism, and the provision of interesting and alternative working and entertainment spaces.

ISSUES

The Wellington City Council has a statutory obligation under the Historic Places Act 1993 and the Resource Management Act 1991 to identify and provide for the protection of the city's heritage. The elevated status given to built heritage under the Resource Management Amendment Act 2003* (which made the recognition and protection of historic heritage a matter of national importance), and the launch of the Council's *Creative Wellington – Innovation Capital* vision, provided an opportune time to review the Council's approach to heritage issues.

New legislation, including amendments to the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990 (with implications for licensed premises), and proposed changes to the Building Act 1991, may also adversely impact on heritage buildings.

The Built Heritage Policy 2005 takes into account these legislative and strategic requirements and changes as well as a number of development issues that are impacting the city's built heritage. In particular, the apartment boom, rooftop additions and 'facadism' are transforming many important heritage buildings in the inner city. Suburban infill housing and the subdivision of existing allotments are impacting on the historic character of key heritage areas.

There are 565 heritage buildings, objects and areas identified in the Wellington District Plan. However, there are many places, particularly both residential and commercial areas in the suburbs, as well as post-World War II commercial buildings and those associated with the city's various ethnic communities that are not identified as heritage buildings in the District Plan, and therefore lack any protection. At the same time, the rules in the District Plan do not always provide a sufficient level of protection to match some community expectations.

* The Resource Management Act 1991 now recognises heritage as a matter of national importance so that:

s6 In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:

(f) The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

In addition the Act defines the following:

historic heritage–

(a) means those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, deriving from any of the following qualities:

(i) archaeological	(ii) architectural
(iii) cultural	(iv) historic
(v) scientific	(vi) technological; and

(b) includes–

(i) historic sites, structures, places, and areas; and	(ii) archaeological sites; and
(iii) sites of significance to Maori, including wahi tapu; and	(iv) surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources



Protecting the city's built heritage is not about locking it up. The continued use of a heritage building is essential to its survival but it should not be at the loss of important heritage fabric. The challenge is to protect the most valued heritage places in an evolving environment while meeting the needs of a rapidly changing community.

RATIONALE

The Council, which itself owns and manages a number of the city's significant heritage buildings, has prepared the Built Heritage Policy 2005 to convey its renewed commitment to the city's built heritage to current owners, the community, visitors to the city and to future generations.

It also provides direction to Councillors and staff in their day-to-day role in heritage management. It will be implemented through the development and review of Council's planning tools and processes, including the District Plan and Annual Plan and Council's relationships with tangata whenua, and with the owners of heritage buildings, and the community.

The key initiatives in the Built Heritage Policy 2005 include:

- **Improving statutory protection for the built heritage** – this will involve undertaking a District Plan Change to strengthen the heritage rules in the District Plan
- **Establishing a new Heritage Incentive Fund** – The new fund will replace the current Building Safety Fund and Heritage Fund and will provide a more flexible approach to encourage the conservation of the city's significant listed heritage buildings
- **Creating more heritage areas in the city and the suburbs** – Identifying more heritage places in the District Plan, in particular, heritage places experiencing development pressure, places which reflect our ethnic and cultural diversity, and post-World War II buildings.

STRUCTURE

The Built Heritage Policy 2005 consists of an overall vision, three high level goals, six objectives and a number of actions. These provide the direction and framework for what the Council wants to achieve in the next 10 years. The Council's vision conforms with the ideals of the Council's Long Term Community Plan, and the Resource Management Act 1991. The Policy also includes an implementation plan, which expands on the actions and outlines a timeframe.