

**Under** the Resource Management Act 1991  
**In the matter of** hearings of submissions and further  
submissions on the Proposed Wellington  
City District Plan  
**By** **Historic Places Wellington/Wellington's  
Character Charitable Trust Inc**  
Submitters

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BILL MCKAY**  
**24 APRIL 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is William (Bill) Donald McKay.

## Qualifications and Experience

2. I am a Senior Lecturer in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of Auckland, and have been a lecturer at the university since 2007.
3. My teaching and research is largely in the area of New Zealand architectural history and urban and architectural design and practice. Since 2019 I have been an elected member of the governing committee of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ). I am also a member of Docomomo New Zealand, the local chapter of an international society focused on the architectural heritage of Modernist buildings. I have a regular urban issues slot on RNZ (Radio New Zealand) and am a frequent commentator on architectural heritage issues. I am also regularly engaged as an architectural critic by magazines and journals such as *Architecture New Zealand*.
4. I have a Bachelor of Architecture (Honours) from Auckland University, equivalent to a Masters.
5. I have regularly practiced in architectural design and currently act as a consultant on a variety of architectural projects. My most recent practical experience relevant to this evidence was the adaptive reuse and refurbishment of a very large (900m<sup>2</sup>) three-storey 1930s concrete building in Upper Queen Street, Auckland.
6. My most relevant recent publications on heritage architecture issues include:
  - (a) Te Whare Rangitupu, the Scaffolded House: Reflections on the temporary reconstitution of Tānewhirinaki (with Anthony Hoete, SAHANZ Annual Conference, Auckland, 2022)
  - (b) Maurice K Smith and the Experimental Building, Auckland, New Zealand (with Julia Gatley, in *Radical Pedagogies*, MIT Press, 2022)
  - (c) Binding Significance; Reflections on the demolition of Aniwaniwa Vistor Centre, Te Urewera (with Carolyn Hill, in *Fabrications*, SAHANZ journal, 2018)
  - (d) *Worship; A History of New Zealand Church Design* (Godwit, 2015)

- (e) Beyond the State; New Zealand State Houses from Modest to Modern (Penguin, 2014)

- 7. I **attach** a copy of my CV to this statement of evidence with full references to all recent publications.

### **Scope of Evidence**

- 8. I have been engaged by Historic Places Wellington and Wellington's Character Charitable Trust (the Submitters).
- 9. The Submitters (and others) have lodged further submissions opposing the proposal by Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington to remove the Gordon Wilson Flats (GWF) from the schedule of heritage buildings (SCHED1) in the Wellington City Proposed District Plan.
- 10. My evidence addresses the heritage values of the Gordon Wilson Flats.

### **Code of Conduct**

- 11. I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and I have complied with it when preparing this evidence. My evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

### **MATERIAL REVIEWED**

- 12. In preparing this statement of evidence I have reviewed the following materials:
  - (a) The submission by Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington on the Proposed District Plan;<sup>1</sup>
  - (b) The Section 42A report prepared by Adam McCutcheon on historic heritage issues for Hearing Stream 3 dated 6 April 2023;<sup>2</sup>
  - (c) The statement of evidence by Moira Smith, conservation architect and heritage advisor dated 5 April 2023;<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Submission 106](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Section 42A report: historic heritage](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Statement by Moira Smith](#)

- (d) Wellington City Council's Historic Heritage Evaluation report for the Gordon Wilson Flats dated August 2021;<sup>4</sup>
- (e) The listing details for the Gordon Wilson Flats as a Category 1 Historic Place on Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga's website;<sup>5</sup>
- (f) Other materials referenced in my statement.

## MY OPINION

13. I agree with the views of the Council's Historic Heritage Evaluation report that the Gordon Wilson Flats have significant historic, social, architectural, technological and rarity values at a national level. It follows that I agree with the decision by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga in February 2021 to register the Gordon Wilson Flats as a Category 1 Historic Place.
14. I also agree with the views of Adam McCutcheon and Moira Smith that the Gordon Wilson Flats have significant heritage values, and that when assessed against the Wellington City Council's heritage criteria and policy 21 of the Regional Policy Statement, the Gordon Wilson Flats are eligible for inclusion in the heritage building schedule.
15. The Gordon Wilson Flats are a very important example of medium to high density apartment-style social housing in New Zealand. They are now especially significant, following the recent (around 2019) demolition of Auckland's Upper Greys Avenue Flats, as the last remaining example of large density maisonette apartment planning from the 1950s. The following paragraphs address key issues related to the heritage values of the Gordon Wilson Flats.
16. *Heritage Value*: My book *Beyond the State: New Zealand State Housing from Modest to Modern* addressed the history of government-sponsored social housing ('state housing') in New Zealand, and the international context, with a special focus on the architectural design and heritage value of the buildings of the First Labour Government onwards until the 1970s. I concur with the statements of the others mentioned above in support of the heritage value of the Gordon Wilson Flats and will not repeat those points here. However I will address relevant issues in terms of my additional expertise as an architectural historian who is also particularly engaged in education, both formally and informally, urban issues criticism and commentary, and

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<sup>4</sup> [HHE Gordon Wilson Flats](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga "McLean Flats and Gordon Wilson Flats"](#).

architectural practice, as these relate to the perception and understanding of heritage value and issues around the conservation of architectural heritage.

17. *Perception of Heritage Value of Medium and High Density Buildings*: While New Zealand's smaller scale 1930s-40s state houses are now widely regarded as well-designed, well-built and of architectural, social and heritage merit, the same does not apply to the 1930s-50s' experiments with increased density and multi-storey social housing, such as the Gordon Wilson Flats. Some of this is due to a public unfamiliarity with density and size; a perception that medium and high density, multi-storey buildings are alien to New Zealand and at odds with our suburban ideals. However there are numerous examples of earlier 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings in styles such as Classical, Stripped Classical and Art Deco etc styles that have been acknowledged for their architectural merit and given heritage protection by councils and/or Heritage New Zealand. I consider the debate around the Gordon Wilson Flats merit may be related to their Modernist design.
18. *Perception of Heritage Value of Modernism*: Similar to above, public and institutional perception of the merit of the Gordon Wilson Flats and similar buildings may be particularly related to the style of Modernism and a perception that it is too recent or too unattractive to have heritage value. This is common world-wide and very common in New Zealand; the latter partly due to the comparative rarity of large-scale examples of Modernism in New Zealand.
19. Important art and design historical and theoretical texts such as Robert Hughes' *Shock of the New*,<sup>6</sup> James Laver's *Taste and Fashion*<sup>7</sup> and Stephen Bayley's *Taste*<sup>8</sup> have been influential in identifying a public and institutional time-lag in the acceptance of merit in relatively new artworks, objects and buildings, in any particular era of human history. Unfortunately, in the area of the built environment, this can lead to premature demolition and loss, both intentional or via neglect and insufficient maintenance. One relevant example of this in New Zealand is the example of Napier and Hastings; today they celebrate their Art Deco heritage but as recently as the 1980s much was being demolished.
20. One other aspect related to these issues is familiarity; that through over-familiarity with objects or buildings, we tend not to fully appreciate their special attributes and value. This is an issue I addressed in my book *Worship; A History of New Zealand*

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<sup>6</sup> BBC "The Shock of the New" (1980, Documentary Television Series).

<sup>7</sup> James Laver *Taste and Fashion, from the French revolution until to-day* (GG Harrap, London, 1937).

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Bayley *Taste* (Circa Press, London, 2017).

*Church Design*.<sup>9</sup> New Zealand's settlement and development paralleled the world-wide popularity of the Gothic Revival style, consequently we have one of the greatest collections of timber-constructed Gothic Revival churches, yet we treat them as run-of-the-mill and of little value. Indeed the proposed demolition of Old St Paul's, Wellington, eventually led to the foundation of the Historic Places Trust, now Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. It is also worth mentioning, in relation to the Gordon Wilson Flats, that New Zealand's Modernist churches are also at increased risk of loss due to the perceptions noted above.

21. *Heritage Value, Building Condition, Adaptive Reuse*: Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington seek delisting on the basis of "insufficient heritage value", but also because of issues related to the building's current condition and future potential.<sup>10</sup> Quite often the physical condition of buildings is a result of intentional neglect and lack of maintenance by owners, but this is not in my view relevant to the heritage merit and status of the building.
22. Through my observations and knowledge of the adaptive reuse of buildings I consider that the Gordon Wilson Flats are capable of being conserved and utilised by their owner or another entity. A very relevant example of this is Auckland University's conservation and reuse of the 1940s Symonds Street Flats, a large, concrete multi-storey block of former state housing apartments that are now being utilised as rentable housing for post-graduate students.
23. Wellington has significantly more seismic risk than Auckland but there are also examples of large multi-storey buildings in Wellington that have been successfully updated structurally. It should also be understood that the conservation of buildings with heritage values does not preclude adaptive reuse and changes to visible features, such as facades or interior planning.
24. *Climate Change and Carbon Footprint*: My final point is to note that the world-wide impact of climate change also affects decisions on the built environment in the area of architectural heritage. Demolition of a large scale building, its consignment to land fill, followed by the construction of a new building of similar or larger size results in an unacceptable amount of waste, emissions and carbon footprint. By contrast, adaptive reuse of existing buildings is increasingly being seen as sustainable and good practice both internationally and in New Zealand. It is particularly imperative

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<sup>9</sup> Bill McKay *Worship: A History of New Zealand Church Design* (Godwit, New Zealand, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> [Submission 106 at \[14\(f\)\]](#).

that institutions with a social role and responsibilities, such as universities and councils, adopt these practices.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill McKay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and 'M'.

**BILL MCKAY**

24 APRIL 2023

## **Appendix A: Bill McKay CV**





## CV Short Version

**NAME:** William (Bill) McKay  
**CURRENT POSITION:** Senior Lecturer  
**DEPARTMENT:** School of Architecture and Planning  
**FACULTY:** Creative Arts and Industries

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### EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

1983 Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) Auckland.

### PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES:

- Member, former Chair, Auckland Architectural Association (AAA)
- Committee Member, Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ) 2019-present
- Member, DocoMoMo NZ

### RECENT SERVICE:

2016-2022 Chairperson Auckland Architectural Association (AAA)  
2021-present External Monitor, Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture, Unitec Institute of Technology  
2018-2020 External Monitor, Bachelor of Architectural Studies, Ara, Christchurch  
2019 Chair and lead in Auckland Architectural Association joining of appeal against extensions to Queens Wharf, Auckland ENV 2019 AKL 000087  
2017 Judge, NZ Interior Awards  
2016 Chair and lead in Auckland Architectural Association appeal against rezoning of Queen Elizabeth Square, Auckland ENV 2016 AKL 000035  
2014 Judge, Architecture + Women NZ Awards  
2014-17 Community Liaison Group member, State Highway 20 / Waterview Connection  
2014 Member Auckland Council Waterview Precinct Plan Stakeholder Consultation Group  
2012 Judge, AAA Cavalier Bremworth Unbuilt Architecture Awards

### RECENT MEDIA:

2017-present day: "Urban Issues with Bill McKay", *Nine to Noon*, Radio New Zealand (fortnightly, over 100 podcasts on-line)  
Numerous other comments and critiques (including op-eds) regarding architecture, urban design, housing etc on radio, television, in print and on-line news media  
Frequent guest speaker to public groups, societies, events related to built environment, urban design, architectural heritage etc  
Frequent speaker on cruise ships: astronomy, Pacific exploration, navigation and settlement

### RECENT SIGNIFICANT DISTINCTIONS / AWARDS:

2015: Finalist in the PANZ Book Design Awards: *Beyond the State: New Zealand State Houses from Modest to Modern*  
2014: Finalist in the NZ Post Book Awards: *Beyond the State: New Zealand State Houses from Modest to Modern* and appeared in *NZ Listener Top 100 Books 2014*.  
2012: Auckland Council Albert Eden Local Board Community Volunteer Award (North Western Community Association)  
2010: Auckland City Council Community Achievement Award (Tunnel or Nothing organisation)  
2009: UoA Recognition Dinner for Valued Contribution to University  
2009: NZIA President's Award for Services to Architecture  
2009: Urbis Magazine Best of Design Issue: Best Architectural Writer

### RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

#### Books:

- 2015 MCKAY, B. *Worship: A History of New Zealand Church Design*, photography Jane Ussher, Auckland: Godwit  
2014 MCKAY, B. 'Part 1 The State House Story', in Bill McKay and Andrea Stevens, photography Simon Devitt, *Beyond the State: New Zealand State Houses from Modest to Modern*, Auckland: Penguin, p8-101

#### Journal Articles:

- 2018 MCKAY, B and HILL, C. "Binding Significance: Reflections on the Demolition of Aniwhaniwa Visitor Centre, Te Urewera" in *Fabrications* (SAHANZ journal) vol 28, 2018 issue 2 p235-255

#### Sections in Books:

- 2022 GATLEY, J and MCKAY, B. "Maurice K. Smith and the Experimental Building in Auckland, New Zealand" in *Radical Pedagogies* (Beatriz Colomina, Ignacio G. Galán, Evangelos Kotsioris and Anna-Maria Meister Eds.) MIT Press p212-214
- 2019 GATLEY, J and MCKAY, B. "The Regional Modernist" in David Straight (ed) *John Scott Works* Massey University Press p12-19
- 2018 GATLEY, J and MCKAY, B. "Beyond Futuna: John Scott, Modern Architecture and Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand" in Grant, Greenop, Refiti, Glenn (Eds.) *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*, Springer, p607-635
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'The Counter-Culture and its Containment: The Loose Years' in Julia Gatley and Lucy Treep (eds) *The Auckland School: 100 Years of Architecture and Planning*, Auckland: University of Auckland School of Architecture and Planning, p74-100
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'Beyond the Quarter Acre Section: Planning for our Changing Communities' in Sarah Austen-Smith and Sarah Martin (eds) *Progressive Thinking: Ten Perspectives on Housing*, Wellington: Public Service Association, p21-23, 28
- 2016 MCKAY, B. 'The Story up to Now', in John Walsh (ed) *Koha: An Offering of New Zealand Architecture and Design, 15th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia*, Auckland: New Zealand Institute of Architects, p 1, 4-7
- 2016 MCKAY, B. Forward to Kate Alexander, *Finishing Touches; How to Find Grace in Your Place*, Auckland: P&G Press, p13
- 2016 MCKAY, B. Two contributions in John Walsh and Patrick Reynolds (eds), *City House, Country House: Contemporary New Zealand Homes*, Auckland: Godwit, p22-31, 62-69
- 2014 MCKAY, B. 'Riding the Waves', in John Walsh (ed) *Last, Loneliest, Loveliest: The New Zealand Pavilion, 14th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia*, Auckland: New Zealand Institute of Architects, p 28-39
- 2013 MCKAY, B. 'Donner House, Titirangi, Auckland, 1947' reprinted in Jeremy Hansen (ed) *Modern, New Zealand Homes from 1938 to 1977*, Auckland: Godwit, p 16-29
- 2012 MCKAY, B. Five contributions in John Walsh and Patrick Reynolds (eds), *Big House Small House: New Homes by New Zealand Architects*: Auckland: Godwit, p54-61, 68-75, 206-209, 394-401, 402-407 978-1-86979-846-8
- 2011 MCKAY, B. 'Living Halls: The War Memorial Community Centres' in Gwynneth Porter (ed) *Living Halls Fiona Jack*, Auckland: Clouds and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, p 65-84<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- 2010 GATLEY, J and MCKAY, B. 'Overseas Solutions Will Not Do: Calls for a New Zealand Architecture' in Julia Gatley (ed), *Group Architects: Towards a New Zealand Architecture*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, p 20-28
- 2010 GATLEY, J and MCKAY, B. 'Novel Building Ventures: Group Experiments in Design and Build' in Julia Gatley (ed), *Group Architects: Towards a New Zealand Architecture*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, p 36-50
- 2010 MCKAY, B and GATLEY, J. 'Buildings for the Sub-tropics: The Group and Other Moderns' in Julia Gatley (ed), *Group Architects: Towards a New Zealand Architecture*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, p 197- 207
- 2009 MCKAY, B. 'Western Approaches' reprinted in Haig Beck & Jackie Cooper (eds) *Architectus: Between Order and Opportunity*, Berkeley: Oro Editions, p 216-217
- 2008 MCKAY, B. Eleven contributions in Julia Gatley (ed), *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, p16,83,106,118,134,156,158,176,196,205,220-221

#### Refereed Conference Proceedings:

- 2022 HOETE, A and MCKAY, B. "Te Whare Rangitupu, The Scaffolded House. Reflections on the temporary reconstitution of Tanewhirinaki", SAHANZ Conference, Auckland
- 2019 HOCHSTEIN, G and MCKAY, B. ""European Émigrés and Modernism in Post-war New Zealand" in *Displacement and Domesticity since 1945*, EAHN Sixth Thematic Conference, Brussels
- 2019 HOCHSTEIN, G and MCKAY, B. "Beyond the House; Modernism in Post-war New Zealand Architecture", AAANZ Conference, Auckland
- 2016 MCKAY, B. 'Looking Across Time: Reflections on Reverse Chronology in the Writing of Architectural History' in AnnMarie Brennan and Philip Goad (eds), *Gold: 33rd Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Melbourne, p64 abstract, full text on-line.
- 2012 MCKAY, B, JACK, F and TAIAROA T. 'War Memorial Wharenui and Wharekai', in Deidre Brown (ed) *Indigenising Knowledges for Current and Future Generations*, Te Whare Kura & Nga Pae o te Maramatanga, Auckland, pp. 80-93.

- 2011 MCKAY, B. 'Modernists and Maori Housing 1960' in Antony Moulis & Deborah van der Plaats (eds), *Audience: 28th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Brisbane.
- 2010 MCKAY, B. and JACK, F. 'Living Halls' in Michael Chapman and Michael Ostwald (eds), *Imaginations: 27th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Newcastle, p271 – 277.
- 2009 MCKAY, B. 'Palisade: Okahu Bay' in Julia Gatley (ed), *Cultural Crossroads: 26th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Auckland, p43 and compact disc p1 - 21.

Reviews and Comments:

- 2023 MCKAY, B. 'Consolation in Unsettled Times', Stevens Lawson NZIA Gold Medal 2022, NZIA, p 35-39
- 2022 MCKAY, B. 'Review: Hundertwasser in New Zealand' *Architecture New Zealand* 5, September-October
- 2022 MCKAY, B. 'The New Net Goes Fishing' *Architecture New Zealand* 3, May-June
- 2022 MCKAY, B. 'Wobbly Like the Natural Earth' *Architecture New Zealand* 2, March-April
- 2021 MCKAY, B. 'Volcanic Dome' *Architecture New Zealand* 3, May-June, p74-84
- 2021 MCKAY, B. 'A Vessel Landed on Another Shore' *Architecture New Zealand* 2, March-April, p??
- 2020 HOCHSTEIN, G and MCKAY, B 'Alien Subversives', *Architecture New Zealand* 1, January-February, p38-44
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'Principles of Engagement', Andrew Patterson NZIA Gold Medal 2017, NZIA, p 40-41
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'A Guide to the Architecture of the Pacific: Tongatapu, Kingdom of Tonga', *Architecture New Zealand* September-October, p35-46
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'The Grenfell Fire: Could It Happen Here?', *Architecture New Zealand* July-August, p25-26
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'Otahuhu Train Station', *Architecture New Zealand* May-June, p56-64
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'Fossicking in The Urban Jungle' in *Thomas Newman Pound. Without Words; A Year Out Walking*, Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland, p1
- 2017 MCKAY, B. 'A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Pacific', *Architecture New Zealand* Jan-Feb, p38-45
- 2016 MCKAY, B. Review of *Cook Islands Art and Architecture* in *Fabrications: Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, Vol 26, No 3, p399-401
- 2016 MCKAY, B. 'Cedar Crucible', *Architecture New Zealand* Sept-Oct, p?
- 2016 MCKAY, B. 'Leigh House by Scarlet Architects', *Houses* 42 Summer, p 66-76
- 2016 MCKAY, B. 'Te Kongahu/Museum of Waitangi', *Architecture New Zealand* May-June, p 72-78
- 2016 MCKAY, B. 'Rore Kahu', *Architecture New Zealand* May-June, p 68-71
- 2016 MCKAY, B. 'The Makers of Venice', *Architecture New Zealand* Mar-April, p 60-65
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'Avondale College', *Architecture New Zealand* Nov-Dec, p 52-58
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'Te Oro', *Architecture New Zealand* 5, p 52-58
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'Games Village for the 2015 Pacific Games', *Architecture New Zealand* 5 p 44- 50
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'Firth Concrete Offices RIP', *Architecture New Zealand* 5 p 16
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'New Design for Freyberg Place Misses the Mark', *NZ Herald* September 15, p?
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'Blyth Performing ArtsCentre', *Architecture New Zealand* 4 p 42-48
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'Iona College Information Resource Centre', *Architecture New Zealand* 3 p 78-86
- 2015 MCKAY, B. 'Bill McKay on... 'the wharf'', *Architecture New Zealand* 3 p 18

Publications etc prior to 2015 are available in longer version