

BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL AT WELLINGTON CITY

UNDER THE Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER OF the hearing of submissions on the Wellington City Proposed

District Plan (Hearing Stream 3)

Speaking Notes of Philip M B Cooke

Submitter # 465

Overview

I have made submissions through the Draft Spatial Plan, Draft District Plan, and Proposed District Plan process. The independent commissioner hearing stage is probably at a level of technical and legal complexity that makes it difficult to make an effective submission as a layperson. I hope my submission will make a worthwhile contribution despite this.

I understand I can take my previous submissions as read and would like to continue to address the same topics which can be summarised as:

- Wellington's appearance and character are defined by the band of Victorian and Edwardian wooden Dwellings which surround the CBD, a distinctly Wellington streetscape. The visibility and coherence of the inner-city suburbs are a critical part of Wellington's identity. I seek an expansion of the Character Area boundaries, particularly for Mount Victoria as it is the suburb that dominates the view when looking out from the CBD.
- The house I live in is in the Claremont Grove/ Austin Street precinct which was the social centre of the original Mt. Victoria suburb (where the Victoria Bowling Club and Pavilion were located) and most of the character buildings remain. Despite this, the area has not been designated a character precinct. I seek for this area to be designated a Character Precinct. I have included a map of proposed boundaries as an appendix and will also list references to at least 6 other submitters who support such a precinct.
- A character precinct, as opposed to being listed on the schedule 1 register, would be an appropriate measure to inform any redevelopment of 20 Austin St. It has essentially been continuously under refurbishment by the various owners since it was converted back to a family home from 5 flats in the 1980s. It is highly unlikely to be under any redevelopment threat while it remains in a precinct of supporting character buildings.
- 20 Austin Street has been included in SCHED1 – Heritage Buildings. It is highly modified from the original Victorian building and relies on the surrounding buildings for scale and context. I request that 20 Austin Street and the surrounding buildings be included within the Character Area boundary (refer to the map in the appendix) and the house removed from SCHED1.

Claremont Grove/ Austin Street Precinct

A significant number of buildings in Claremont Grove and adjacent areas of Austin Street fall outside the proposed character areas. This area which was adjacent to the original Victoria Bowling Club (now the Hazel Court Flats) forms an important precinct with many character buildings. I note the [heritage listing information](#) on the council website describes Hazel Court as being in a setting "with many historic single houses" and except for Hazel Court, all the buildings are either the ones from the initial constructions around 1880 or the infill houses, which were constructed in approximately

1900 – 1910. There are already two listed Heritage Buildings in this area and an additional two are proposed. These buildings are reliant on the contribution of surrounding buildings, which also need preservation as part of a character area, not just a few isolated buildings protected from redevelopment like museum pieces.

The abundance of character buildings was due to the area being a desirable area to live while being a social hub for the community formed around the Victoria Bowling Club. The club pavilion was built in 1898 and membership of the club was so popular it was controlled by ballot. A quick search of "[Papers Past](#)" reveals many reports of social functions (concerts and other functions in addition to bowling related) at the club and notably in 1902 a report, after work was done on the pavilion, saying "[the club now has a social room second to none in the city](#)".

The council's heritage planning for Mt Victoria is based on the 2017 Heritage Study Report. This report singled out individual buildings in the Claremont Grove/ Austin St precinct though failed to identify it as an historic character area, or do research into it, despite the original houses remaining and it being the hub of Mt Victoria Society centred around the Victoria Bowling Clubs pavilion and social rooms. Support for this to be a character area has come from at least 6 other submitters (75.3&.14, 111.13, 155.21, 214.15, FS39.10, FS82.202) and I would like to record my support for these submitters in relation to the creation of this character area. Ms Smith in her statement of evidence on behalf of the council essentially acknowledges this is a character area in several places and advises the council should do research with a view to enacting this with a later plan change (recommendation 1024/5). I submit that there is clear evidence that the area meets the requirements for a character precinct, and this could be formally researched in a very short time if work was put into it. It is not a satisfactory outcome to adopt a plan having a clearly identified deficiency requiring later amendment and putting the area at risk of redevelopment until this is done. I ask that the council be requested to do the research required to formally identify Claremont Grove/ Austin St as an historic character area immediately and that it be included in the district plan.

SCHED1 – Heritage Buildings DP Ref # 471, 20 Austin Street

I have requested the roof be removed from the heritage protection. It has only become an issue as it was described in the heritage report as "somewhat unusual". It is a construction detail that was intended to be hidden, could not be seen from the front of the house, and is problematic design with large internal gutters which cause leaks (this is an increasing concern as rain events get more severe). Ms Smith in her statement of evidence for the Council essentially recognises as an architect the roof is of poor design "233. As an architect, I agree that internal gutters are problematic". As a remedy, she recommends the heritage report be modified to recognise the problem so that it gets considered if a resource consent application is made to correct it. I am not aware that this recommendation to alter the heritage report has been followed. I submit even if it was, this is a completely impractical outcome that will result in the process and cost of getting an appropriate modified design approved and implemented will inevitably result in the problem not being corrected when the house is next re-roofed and probably never. Considering it is a feature that was never intended to be seen and is confirmed to be of poor design, I submit that the reason it is "unusual" is it is of poor design which an architect or builder would not want to replicate. I request the roof be removed from the heritage designation.

I disagree with the heritage report's conclusion that this is "one of Mt Victoria's best preserved 1870s residences." It is a beautiful house that has had its character restored and I am considerably devoted to it having lived in it and worked on it continuously since 1999. It is a fine example of a character house which has been successfully adapted to suit the needs of its occupants over its

lifetime. These modifications have not been done in a way that could be practically reversed and were not designed as heritage alterations (i.e. no attempt was made to follow heritage principles like [ICOMOS](#) or similar). Very little of the interior remains original as this was lost prior to its conversion back to a family home in the 1980s after being in 5 flats. The exterior of the building is dominated by the two Roger Walker designed additions. The first was to the house's rear (Austin St side) and the second was to the front (city side). The later addition involved significant alteration to the appearance of the main elevation of the house with the filling-in of the original balcony, the addition of new semi-circular fanlight windows above 1980s style French doors, and the addition of a slate paved L-shaped terrace with an inverse curved roof above. I have attached elevation drawings of both these alterations and additions in an appendix which clearly show the extensive changes to the appearance of the house these made. These additions and alterations are well documented with full-size A1 plans and elevations existing which are in the council records. Both additions were consented, and approved after inspection, through the council system of that time.

Ms. Smith in her statement of evidence for the council says in Appendix 3, point 1119:

“assessment that this is an excellent example of an early Italianate villa is difficult to prove as the principal elevation is not visible from either Austin Street or Claremont Grove, and there are no known publicly available images. The assessment is based on the extent of the house that is visible from the street, and on building consent drawings”.

It is correct that the front of the house can no longer be seen from any public location due to the in-fill houses that were built around it in the early 1900s. As I have outlined, very good drawings of the Roger Walker designed additions are on the council records from which it can be clearly seen the original 1875 appearance of the house has been substantially and irreversibly altered. I believe these additions add to the house's character and its history of sympathetic adaption and alteration. Having said that, they clearly remove and replace significant elements of the original Italianate Villa design.

I submit it is unreasonable to place a heritage order primarily based on it being, as expressed in the heritage report “an excellent architectural example of an early Italianate villa” when the main elevation with these features is not visible, and these features are highly and irrevocable modified by the 1980s alterations. I ask that the designation be removed.

In conclusion, I am a passionate supporter of the preservation of the historical character of my own home and the surrounding area. I commend the council officer's research work into the area though this has regrettably been focused on individual buildings. I imagine this technically fulfils the requirement for the identification of heritage locations and buildings though fails to correctly identify this important and notable precinct of heritage character which is under threat of being lost through the proposed plan. The best way to achieve protection for this highly concentrated group of historic character buildings is to include them in a designated character precinct.

Appendix 2: 1983 and 1987 Additions (Roger Walker)



- 1944
- 1962
- 1973
- 1983
- 1987
- 2017

- UNKNOWN
- DEMOLISHED

0 2000mm

ELEVATIONS 1983

Project	THE HOLLINS	Drawing	EAST & WEST ELEVATIONS 1983	Sheet number	A206
Project address	20 Austin St, Mt Victoria, Wellington, 6011	Owner	PHIL COOKE & JAN DUNCAN	Date	14.05.2017
				Scale	1:100 @ A3



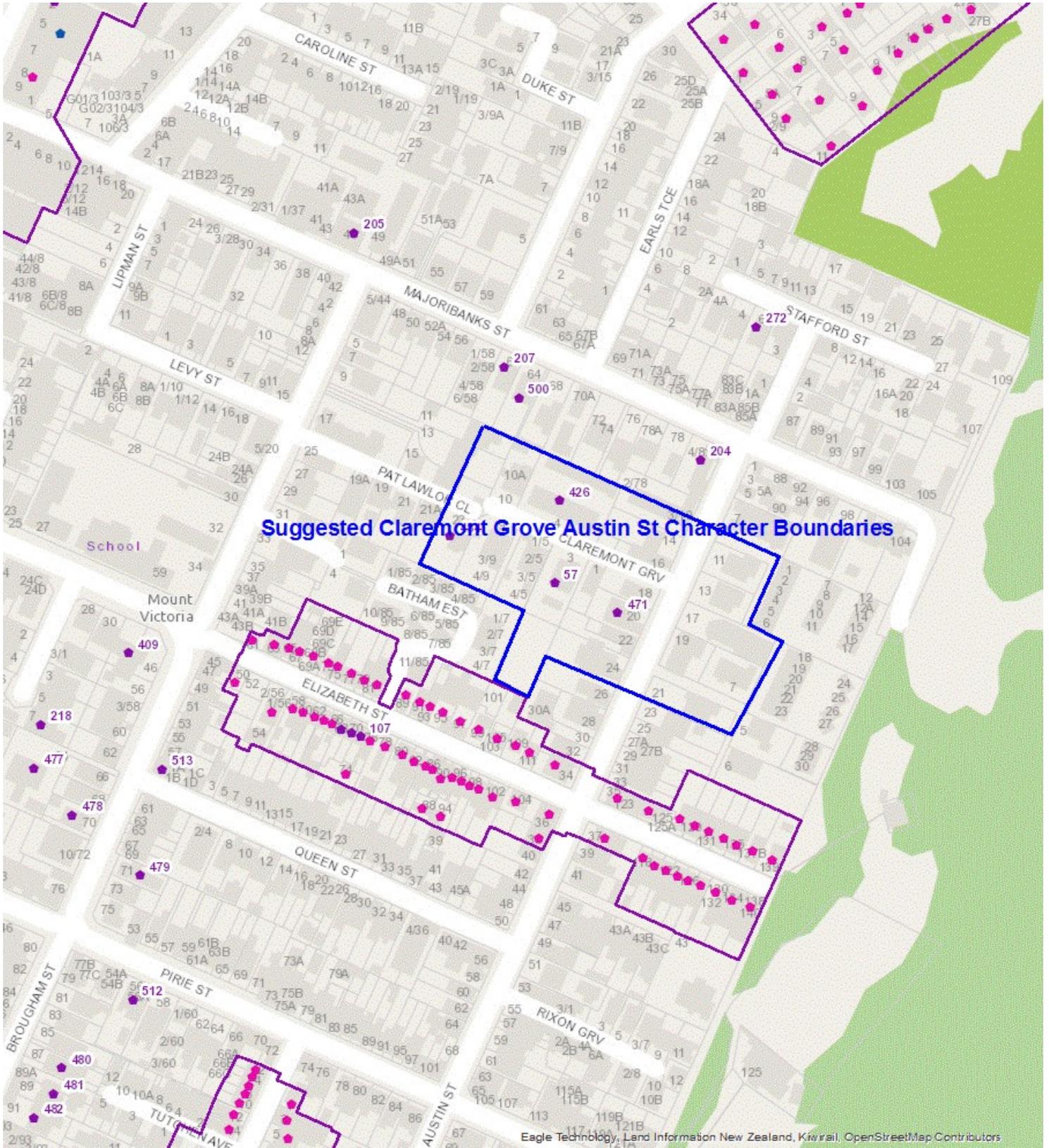
- 1944
- 1962
- 1973
- 1983
- 1987
- 2017

- UNKNOWN
- DEMOLISHED

0 2000mm

ELEVATIONS 1987

Project	THE HOLLINS	Drawing	EAST & WEST ELEVATIONS 1987	Sheet number	A208
Project address	20 Austin St, Mt Victoria, Wellington, 6011	Owner	PHIL COOKE & JAN DUNCAN	Date	14.05.2017
				Scale	1:100 @ A3



Heritage Buildings



Heritage Building Extent



Heritage Areas



Heritage Area points

- Contributing Building
- Non-heritage Building