

**Before the Hearings Panel
Appointed by Hutt City Council**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management
Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of Hutt City Plan Change 56

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF REUBEN GEORGE DAUBÉ ON BEHALF OF
HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND POUHERE TAONGA**

HUTT CITY PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 56

Heritage Statement

29 March 2023

1. My name is Reuben George Daubé, and I am employed as Conservation Advisor for Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) based in the Central Region Office, Wellington.
2. I hold the qualification of Master of Museum and Heritage Practice (MMHP) from Victoria University of Wellington. I graduated in 2019 and I am a committee member of the Professional Historians' Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (PHANZA).
3. I have 4 years' experience in cultural heritage roles in New Zealand. My previous roles include working as Heritage Advisor RMA at Wellington City Council.
4. I have not previously presented evidence at district plan hearings, resource consent hearings and at the Environment Court.
5. Although this evidence is not prepared for an Environment Court hearing I have read, understood and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions I express. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.
6. HNZPT made a submission on proposed Plan Change 56 (PC56). The HNZPT submission related mainly to the residential heritage precincts proposed in the plan change. I have been asked by HNZPT to assist by providing heritage evidence on PC56.
7. In preparing this evidence I have read the relevant submissions, further submissions, and the Section 42A reports prepared by Council staff and/or consultants.
8. I have focused my evidence on the extents of two Heritage Precincts: HA-2 – Heretaunga Settlement, and HA-4 Jackson Street. I have also commented on the heritage values of the Naenae Civic Centre.

HA-2 Heretaunga Settlement

9. HNZPT submitted in support of the inclusion of Heretaunga Settlement Area in Appendix Heritage 3. The heritage significance of this area has been recognised through its inclusion in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero.

10. I have reviewed the S42A Report and I agree with the recommendation to revise the Heretaunga Settlement Heritage Precinct (HA-2) to exclude 225 The Esplanade. The property is a modern building which does not contribute to the values of the heritage area.



Figure 1: 225 The Esplanade

11. I also support the recommendation to exclude 424 to 430 Jackson Street from HA-2, as in my view, the buildings do not directly contribute to the heritage values identified in the Heretaunga Settlement Heritage Precinct. I further note that these excluded properties are also not included in the extent of the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero Historic Area – List number 7028.
12. The integrity of the heritage area is not diminished in any way by the reduced area of Heretaunga Settlement Heritage Precinct, as notified in PC56. In my view, not including the properties with no heritage values ensures that the integrity of the area is retained.

HA-4 Jackson Street Heritage Precinct

13. As notified, the proposed Jackson Street Heritage Precinct (HA-4), provides for a lesser extent of the Heritage Area compared to the Operative District Plan and also the Historic Area in the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero (List number 7369).

14. HNZPT submitted supporting the inclusion of the Jackson Street Historic Precinct and recommended consideration of the inclusion of Jackson Street as far east as Cuba Street. This encompasses the Jackson Street Historic Area that is included in the Heritage New Zealand List/ Rārangī Kōrero.
15. Ms Stevens, in her evidence supporting the S42A Report, has recommended that several properties (numbers 354 to 364, on the southern side of the street) be added to HA-4. 360 to 364 Jackson Street are shown in the illustration below.



Figure 2: 360 to 364 Jackson Street

16. I agree with these additions to HA-4, being the properties at 354, 358, 360, 362 and 364. In my opinion, 358, 360, 362 and 364 contribute to the Heritage Precinct due to the age of construction, architecture, and historic values.
17. 354 Jackson Street is a modern, non-contributing building, however due to its location within the Heritage Precinct, it is necessary to be included in the Precinct for continuity.
18. I have also considered whether the buildings to the east of 364 (numbers 374 to 378) as well as the buildings on the north side of Jackson Street (numbers 313 to 337) should be included in HA-4.



Figure 3: 313 Jackson Street



Figure 4: 319 Jackson Street



Figure 5: 374 to 378 Jackson Street



Figure 6: 327, 329 Jackson Street

19. I support the recommendation to exclude 313 to 337, and 374 to 378 Jackson Street from HA-4, as most of the buildings in this block have been modified or are of modern construction. These characteristics therefore mean the buildings do not contribute to the heritage value of the area as a historic precinct.

20. My view is that 327, 329 Jackson Street has some heritage value, due the age of construction. However, the building's role as a contributor to the Jackson Street Heritage Precinct has been diminished by the loss of surrounding heritage. The majority of surrounding buildings consists of new three-storey buildings.

Naenae Civic Centre

21. The heritage values of Naenae have been recognised in a research report on Naenae by historian Dr. Ben Schrader, commissioned by New Zealand Historic Places Trust in 2012. Dr Schrader notes that *Naenae is the best expression of both the spatial and social dimensions of*

the 'garden city' ideal in New Zealand.¹ For the Panel's convenience I have attached a copy of Dr. Schrader's report to my statement.

22. Naenae Post Office has recently (May 2020) been entered on the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangi Kōrero as a Category 1 Historic Place. The context of the Naenae Post Office in the centre of Hillary Court and Naenae as a suburb is an important aspect of the identified heritage values of this place. On page 26 of the Listing Report for Naenae Post Office the author makes the following statement:

The place forms part of an ensemble of largely original modernist buildings that comprise Hillary Court, New Zealand's first comprehensively planned commercial centre and pedestrian mall. The post office is the landmark structure within this complex, Furthermore, it is an important element in the state housing suburb of Naenae, a place of major importance in the history of government and housing in New Zealand. While other major state housing schemes had purpose-built shops or shopping centres, the scale of Hillary Court and the intactness of the mall and the surrounding state housing area elevate its importance².

23. For reference I have attached the HNZPT Listing report for Naenae Post Office to my statement.



Reuben Daubé

29 March 2023

¹ Unpublished Research Report by Ben Schrader, Page 3, New Zealand Historic Places Trust 2012.

² Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga List Entry Report for a Historic Place, List No. 9806, 14 January 2020, page 26

Appendix 1

Research Report on Heritage Features, Naenae, Lower Hutt

Appendix 2

Report for a Historic Place - Naenae Post Office (Former) Lower Hutt (List No. 9806, Category 1)



New Zealand Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga
Research Report on Heritage Features

Naenae, Lower Hutt



Hillary Court, Naenae (Ben Schrader, 2010, NZHPT)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Built from 1945, the Lower Hutt suburb of Naenae is the best expression of both the spatial and social dimensions of the 'garden city' ideal in New Zealand. This research report recognises its importance in the history of New Zealand planning and urbanism.

The garden city movement arose in Britain in the 1890s as a response to the perceived degradation and anomie of large cities. It proposed the building of new suburban-like garden cities: big enough to provide city-scale amenities and jobs, yet small enough to encourage sociability. The hub of communities was to be a community centre, combining commercial, social and cultural functions. These settlements followed organic planning principles, where streets tracked the contours of the land and varied in width to accommodate different traffic densities. Buildings would be set in parkland, which would meander through settlements, enabling residents to avoid motorised traffic.

Naenae formed part of the first Labour government's state housing programme to relieve a chronic housing shortage and stimulate local jobs and industry. In searching for models for the building of Naenae – and the neighbouring settlements of Epuni and Taita – the state turned to the garden city ideal. The scheme's plan was drawn up by the Modernist architect Ernst Plischke and was centred on a community centre. Land was set aside for industry; streets were curvilinear, and houses were placed amongst parkland, all in accordance with garden city practice. The drama of the story lies in the planners and residents attempt to realise the social vision of the settlement. This was led by William Roberson ('Co-op Robbie'). He convinced residents to begin a consumers' co-operative and worked tirelessly to promote the community centre as the hub of community life. He and his supporters believed it was possible to forge a new form of urbanism in Naenae that would transform the culture of cities. The high level of idealism was unmatched in any other mid-20th century New Zealand settlement.

While the vision was not fully realised, much of it was. The spatial planning of the settlement has changed little from Plischke's original design. The community/civic centre – comprising Hillary Court, Naenae community hall, Naenae Olympic pool, Mildenhall Park and Naenae railway station – also reflects his original plan for an integrated transport, commercial and cultural centre for the settlement. This area certainly became a hub of community life. The industrial area also thrived and still provides local jobs in 2010.

The heritage value of Naenae lies in its aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical, social and traditional significance. The aesthetic value lies in its (largely) original street pattern, common housing style, and the careful integration of built elements in the community/civic centre. The architectural value rests in the common use of the English cottage style for state houses and the common use of the Modern Movement idiom for the buildings in the community centre. The cultural significance lies in the realm of ideas, as an expression of post-war utopian-inspired planning. The historical significance rests in the unprecedented scale of the Naenae, Epuni and Taita scheme; the prominent people associated with it, and way it shows how overseas models of urbanism have been adapted in the New Zealand context. The social significance lies in how politicians, officials and residents came together to promote a new way of living combining the best of town and country life. Finally, the traditional significance relates to Naenae's long association with Maori, particularly the Te Ati Awa leader Wiremu Tako Ngatata.

The heritage value of Naenae lies not only in how it illustrates the past, but what it can say to us about the present and future. The present New Urbanist ambition to build settlements that promote community bonding is far from new. Highlighting how Naenae dealt with the same issue can spark fresh ideas and debate that could lead to still stronger communities in the future.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

This report was prepared in order to provide information on the history of Naenae and an assessment of its heritage values using the criteria of the *Historic Places Act 1993*. The report identifies features of heritage significance and sets out evidence to support the assessment of heritage values within the historical context.

The New Zealand Historic Places Trust hopes the report will be used to promote the high heritage values of Naenae as New Zealand's exemplary and most fully-realised example of Garden City urban planning design. The report will inform a possible future registration of Naenae's heritage significance by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, and can be used by Hutt City Council to inform decision-making regarding management of the suburb.

2. IDENTIFICATION¹

2.1. Name of Area

Name: Naenae

2.2. Location Information

Address

Naenae

Lower Hutt

Wellington Region

Local Authority: Hutt City Council

¹ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1. Historical Information

Naenae is the best expression of the social and spatial components of the garden city ideal in New Zealand. Originating in Britain in the late 19th century, this movement led to the development of modern town planning and was instrumental in the shaping and reshaping of twentieth century cities. Its ideas continue to influence present day New Urbanism practitioners.

Garden city movement

The movement arose in Britain in reaction to the rise of industrial cities. Reformers feared that squalid conditions in cities were creating a degenerate population that would cause national decline. They also worried that the perceived individualism and anomie of large cities threatened social stability. The solution, argued journalist Ebenezer Howard, was to remove people from metropolitan areas and resettle them in small, suburban-like garden cities. Influenced by William Morris and Edward Bellamy, Howard's aim was to create a new and equitable society. He was not a socialist but believed land should be commonly held to avoid avaricious landlordism. Land would therefore be vested in a company, which would build the city and secure tenants, with profits providing for people's welfare. Participatory democracy would be encouraged and a citizens' elected board of management would govern the city.²

Model Plan

In his 1898 diagram of a model garden city, Howard divided the space into family-orientated suburban wards and a central civic ward. The social hub of each ward was a primary school cum local community centre. Commercial and cultural amenities were sited at the core, with industry at the periphery. Encircling the city was a green belt and agricultural hinterland. The pattern reflected a growing recognition of the need for land use zoning to improve living conditions. Cities were to have a population limit of 30,000, after which a new garden city would be built, each linked by a rapid transit system. Howard believed his model combined the best of town and country living.³

² Ben Schrader, *We call it home: a history of state housing in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2005, pp. 166-67

³ Schrader, 'Planning happy families: a history of the Naenae idea', MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1993, pp. 19-21.

Environmentalism

Underpinning this vision was a belief in environmentalism: that physical environments shaped human behaviour. By placing people in well-designed surroundings, environmentalists believed it was possible to improve behaviours. Environmentalists also believed that spatial arrangements – the placement of buildings and streets – could encourage social interaction and community bonding.

Letchworth

Letchworth was the first garden city, built outside London in 1903. The organic forms of medieval urbanism inspired its designers, Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker. Spurning the grid-plan, its streets followed the topography, and varied in width to accommodate different traffic densities. Houses were constructed in the English-cottage style and sited to maximise their exposure to sun. Cul-de-sacs were also introduced to encourage social interaction.⁴

Radburn

The planning of Letchworth influenced generations of twentieth century urban planners, including Americans Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. In 1928 they advanced garden city thought by designing a settlement in New Jersey that reduced the impact of the motorcar: Radburn. Motorised traffic was channelled around rather than through communities (or neighbourhood units). Houses were arranged so they faced communal parkland, through which ran pedestrian walkways to shops, primary school cum community centres and other facilities. The environment was also designed to promote nuclear family life. Amenities included sports fields, crèches, and supervised recreation programmes. These spatial arrangements were not only safer; they were also designed to foster face-to-face contact and community life.⁵

Hutt Valley Development Scheme

Radburn was an important influence in the planning of the Hutt Valley Development Scheme, of which Naenae was a pivotal part. Work began in 1936 when the first Labour government bought hundreds of acres of land in northeast Lower Hutt for the purpose of housing.⁶

⁴ Schrader, *We call it home*, p. 168

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 168-69.

⁶ Schrader, 'Happy families', p. 82.

Before 1840 the area had been forested and swampy. Following colonisation the New Zealand Company divided the land into suburban allotments, with the one centred on Naenae becoming a native reserve, possibly because it was the site of Te Mako pa – between Naenae Rd and Park Ave.⁷ In the early 1850s the prominent Te Ati Awa leader Wiremu Tako Ngatata (Wi Tako) moved from Kūmutoto to Te Mako, where he lived in a large house which he named after the pa.⁸ He built a £3,000 pataka called Nuku Tewhatewha to symbolise his support for a Maori king – one of seven built for this purpose and now exhibited in The NewDowse museum.⁹ Wi Tako lived at Te Mako until 1880, when he sold it to pastoralist William Beetham. After World War One the government set up a poultry and market garden settlement for partially disabled servicemen nearby (an area known as Waddington). The land was drained and the district became Wellington's main market garden. The state's purchase of the area for housing rattled many, but the government was unrepentant, declaring people had priority over vegetables.¹⁰

The Hutt Valley Development Scheme was part of a wider state housing construction programme initiated by the Labour government in 1936 to relieve a chronic housing shortage and stimulate work and local manufacturing – something the 1938 introduction of import licensing further encouraged. Labour believed suburbs were the best place to raise families and so focused on suburban housing provision. So far state houses had been built in blocks of streets but this scheme was on the scale of a small city – 20,000 people. In March 1939 the Internal Affairs minister, William Parry, held a conference of Hutt Valley MPs, mayors, and government officials to discuss the scheme. The meeting agreed that a regional plan – a New Zealand first – was required to assess its wider impact. This task was given to the government town planner John Mawson. Mawson rightly believed Lower Hutt's role as a regional manufacturing centre would increase and recommended a light industrial area be situated within Naenae. His plan centred Naenae on a large square, through which ran the proposed eastern deviation railway line. About the square was a commercial hub and industrial zone. Other than the adoption of land use zoning and an industrial area,

⁷ A survey of existing literature on Maori occupation of Lower Hutt has not revealed which iwi or hapu founded Te Mako. Cairns, A R, 'Ngatata, Wiremu Tako ? - 1887, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz>

⁸ Wi Tako became a Member of the Legislative Council and is an ancestor of the distinguished (Hutt Valley) Love family. Te Mako (the house) burnt down in 1928. David McGill, *Lower Hutt: the first garden city*, Lower Hutt, 1991, p. 91

⁹ Deidre Brown, 'Nga Paremata Maori: The Architecture of Maori Nationalism', *Fabrications*, Vol 12, No 2, Dec 2002, p. 3 (1-17). William Beetham shifted the pataka to Brancepeth Station, Wairarapa.

¹⁰ Schrader, 'Happy families', p. 83.

the plan showed scant attention to garden city thought, owing more to nineteenth century Palmerston North than twentieth century Radburn.¹¹

Ernst Plischke

This was among the first things architect Ernst Plischke changed when he came to revise the plan in 1943, reducing Mawson's square by half and resiting it east of the railway station.¹² Plischke was a refugee from Nazi Austria and had arrived in Wellington in 1939. Although he had an international reputation as a Modern Movement architect, he was reduced to working as a draughtsman in the government's Housing Division.¹³ Personality conflicts with the chief architect, Gordon Wilson, saw him transferred to the town planning section under Reginald Hammond – a strong advocate of garden city planning.¹⁴ Plischke's Viennese architectural training had given special emphasis to the planning of cities and towns and he was aware of the latest garden city planning ideas.

Naenae plan

In viewing Plischke's 1943 plan for Naenae and the neighbouring suburbs of Epuni and Taita, the most striking difference between them and rest of Hutt Valley is the street plan. Whereas Epuni continues the existing diagonal grid, the streets of Naenae and Taita follow organic planning principles. New streets were curvilinear and varied in width to meet different traffic densities. In Naenae 15 percent of the land was set aside for reserves. As one official noted: 'through these reserves and along stream banks will meander paths, the whole forming pleasant walks amid park-like surroundings.'¹⁵ A former swamp would form the main sports ground (Naenae Park). Primary schools were sited so children could easily walk to school and local shopping centres were placed to serve 500 houses. Most houses were to be two or three-bedroom, single unit dwellings for nuclear families and almost all were designed in the English cottage style. Some houses would be semi-detached and a few would be double storeyed for visual variety; no house in the same part of a street would be identical. Power and telephone cables would be laid underground. Mawson's industrial zone was left where it was, but factories were to be set in parkland: 'in accordance with gar-

¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 85-86; John Mawson. 'The Hutt Valley scheme'. *Planning*. Vol 2, No.19 (July 1941), pp. 6-8.

¹² As he later wrote: 'the idea seemed rather funny to lead a new railway line across the middle of a new main square.' Ernst Plischke, *On the Human Aspect of Modern Architecture*, Vienna, 1969, p. 110.

¹³ Plischke went on to become a seminal figure in the Modern Movement in New Zealand, designing many important buildings, including Massey House on Lambton Quay – New Zealand's first glass curtain wall office building.

¹⁴ Hammond designed Orakei Garden Suburb, Auckland, in 1925.

¹⁵ 'Hutt Valley operations', 1944, HD 6/71, part 3, Archives New Zealand.

den city principles as practiced in England and America.¹⁶ The commercial hub also remained but, in the manner of Radburn, combined commercial, social and cultural functions.¹⁷

Community Centre

Plischke's community centre design was based on San Marco Square in Venice, which he believed was akin to a community centre. San Marco comprises three pedestrian squares surrounded by public buildings and cafes. At the intersection of the two main squares is an impressive campanile (bell tower), a vertical contrast to the horizontal buildings. As with San Marco, Plischke's design for Naenae features three pedestrian squares, with a water tower providing the campanile-like element. The main buildings surround the larger square and comprise a hall, library, meeting rooms, hotel, post office and offices for local administration and professional services. A pool softens the hard lines of the Modernist-style buildings – whose pilotis (pillars) resemble the arcades of San Marco.¹⁸ The smaller square is for shopping and features a garden, a place to meet or watch people from a café table. A crèche would also enable mothers to leave their children while they shopped or relaxed with friends. Two cinemas are sited at opposite ends of the squares, beside car parks and a bus interchange. Finally, a pedestrian overbridge links the complex to the railway station. The third square opens to the street, inviting passers-by to enter it.¹⁹

Adaptation

For the Director of Housing Construction, George Alberton, the whole scheme presented the opportunity to build 'an ideal garden city in the Hutt Valley.'²⁰ Naenae was never a garden city in Howard's sense of the term nor was it a faithful reproduction of Radburn. There were no neighbourhood units. Arterial streets ran through the community rather than around it.²¹ Neither did primary schools have dual functions as local community centres. The requirement for Naenae to sit within the existing street plan explains the absence of neighbourhood units, whereas the use of schools as community centres was unconventional in the New Zealand context. The pragmatic solution was therefore to centralise activities in a suburban-wide community centre. In this way the whole of

¹⁶ Hammond to State Advances Corporation, 6 Sept 1943, HD 6/71, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

¹⁷ Schrader, 'Happy families', p. 91-93.

¹⁸ In later drawings the arcade element disappeared, replaced by New Zealand-styled cantilevered verandahs

¹⁹ Schrader, 'Happy families', pp. 93-95

²⁰ Alberton to General Manager of Railways, 6 April 1944, HD 6/71, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

²¹ Plischke designed a concurrent Radburn-like scheme for Trentham, a drawing of which appears in his 1947 book *Design and Living* on page 83.

Naenae became a neighbourhood unit, with Epuni and Taita each forming separate units.

A purist might argue that these changes compromised Naenae's value as an exemplar of garden city ideas and practice. But the history of the movement shows that it was characterised more by adaptation than prescription, with settlements modifying principles to better suit local conditions – as Radburn proves. Naenae falls within this tradition. Neither a carbon copy of Letchworth or Radburn, Plischke's plan drew on both to form a distinctly New Zealand garden city settlement.

Social planning

What Plischke was to the spatial planning of Naenae, the Canadian William Robertson was to its social and cultural planning. Little is known of his background, except that he was single and something of a loner, perhaps explaining why he threw himself into the Naenae project. He became known as 'Co-op Robbie'.

As we have seen, Letchworth and Radburn were based on environmentalist assumptions. Buildings and streets were arranged to cultivate family life and community spirit. But environmentalism could only go so far. The development of community was equally reliant on people sharing the common vision that strong community bonds were worth pursuing. And it required people who were willing to put in the hours to make it happen: visiting neighbours, coaching sports teams, and organising activities. Another American town, Greenbelt, showed how this could be done.

Greenbelt

Greenbelt, Maryland, was founded as a federal government initiative in 1933. Its spatial planning was based on Radburn's neighbourhood units; its population was capped at 10,000, and it was encircled by a greenbelt. As with Howard's original plan, a citizens' elected Board of Management governed the town. To further community integration a consumers' co-operative (shops collectively owned by the community) was founded and given exclusive trading rights. A consumer-owned health clinic/hospital was also opened. Primary schools educated children during the day and became community centres at night. Linked to the schools were professional recreation workers who organised recreational activities. Critics saw it as the thin edge of socialism and made sure only three

were built. But as with Radburn, Greenbelt inspired many people, including Robertson.²²

Consumers' co-operative

Robertson believed the state housing scheme now arising at Naenae, Epuni and Taita provided an ideal opportunity to build a local Greenbelt-styled development. In May 1945 he lobbied the Minister of Rehabilitation, Clarence Skinner, to set up consumers' co-operatives in the new settlements. Skinner said it would need community support first. Encouraged, Robertson surveyed Naenae households, of which 91 percent pledged their support. He returned to the government and won the backing of Prime Minister Peter Fraser and local MP Walter Nash. They promised him a block of shops in Naenae's Seddon Street for a consumers' cooperative and gave him a government position to develop the proposal. Liaising with community groups in the state housing areas, he convinced them to support not only consumers' cooperatives but health and community centres too. As he explained, the objective he was 'aiming at in Naenae and the adjacent state housing settlements of Lower Hutt, had already been achieved at a newly built American town [Greenbelt], and the American experiment was a success.'²³

The Hutt Valley Consumers' Co-operative Society was formed in September 1945. Members paid a minimum £5 shareholding and elected a management board. Profits were returned to shareholders through regular dividends. The first co-operative shops opened in Seddon Street soon after – comprising a grocer, greengrocer, butcher, and dairy. Further shops opened in Taita and Epuni and a much-needed door-to-door bread and milk delivery service was also started. The co-op quickly proved popular with residents, with membership increasing by over 300 per cent between December 1945 and October 1946.²⁴

Health Centres

A proposed scheme for Greenbelt-style health centres was stillborn. Despite widespread community support – including from Lower Hutt Mayor Jack Andrews – the powerful British Medical Association was able to scuttle the scheme. Robertson was determined the proposed community centres would not meet the same fate.²⁵

²² Schrader, 'Happy families', pp. 96-98

²³ William Robertson, 'How it Began', *Hutt Valley Cooperator*, Jan 1947. p. 3

²⁴ Schrader, *We call it home*, p. 172

²⁵ Schrader, 'Happy families', pp. 107-08.

Community Centres

Crawford and Gwen Somerset had set up the first modern community centre in Feilding in the late 1930s. It became a social nexus in the town, providing facilities ranging from a crèche to a gym. It also ran a youth group, canteen, and adult education programmes, its success inspiring similar initiatives elsewhere. Part of their appeal was the widespread perception that modern life was severing social bonds and community centres were required to reunite them.²⁶

Richard (R. S. V.) Simpson (later a prominent Wellington lawyer) chaired the Hutt Valley Community Centre Planning Committee but Robertson was the driving force. The committee engaged Plischke to draw up plans for centres in Naenae, Epuni and Taita. In Naenae, he abandoned his strongly urban, San Marco-inspired design for a more pastoral, suburban composition. The revised design included a hall, gym, tavern, library, hobby and lecture rooms, a shopping centre and cinema. Tennis courts, bowling greens, a swimming pool and sports fields also featured. A shopping centre and cinema sat alongside the community centre. The architecture is Modernist and striking, its severity moderated by green reserves and planting.

The government pledged to pay half the cost of the centre if residents paid the rest. This would mean instituting a special residential rate. A postal ballot of all households in the three suburbs was organised for April 1948 to seek the necessary support. The ballot was lost by a narrow margin, but a slight majority of Naenae residents had voted in favour; a second ballot there won overwhelming support. It took another year for the government to pass the necessary legislation. Then it was voted out of office. The succession of delays and the failure of a community recreation programme in Naenae – modelled on Greenbelt – was the last straw for Robertson. In November 1950 he tragically threw himself before a speeding Melling train.

Vision realised

The new National government agreed to honour the previous government's £30,000 subsidy for the Naenae scheme. In February 1951 the Lower Hutt City Council went back to the government seeking a further £27,000 so that centres might be built at Epuni and Taita too.²⁷ This was rejected largely on the basis that such funding was meant for war memorial halls, forcing the existing subsidy to be spread across three centres. Plischke's revised scheme was set aside and

²⁶ Ibid. p. 110.

²⁷ Memorandum for Minister of Internal Affairs from Secretary of Internal Affairs, 15 Oct 1953, IA 1 3148 Record 174/522 pt 2, 'Community Centre: Approval', Archives New Zealand.

a new Naenae plan was drawn up by the Ministry of Works and released in September 1953. It comprised: a community hall, pedestrianised shopping centre, railway station, Olympic-sized pool, and sports grounds.

Naenae Shopping Centre – Hillary Court

Planning for the shopping centre had begun in November 1951 when government officials had decided Naenae was the ideal site for a district facility. A survey had found that 50 shops were warranted, providing space for chain stores, banks, food stores, as well as for professional premises such as doctors and dentists. A post office, cinema and a hotel were also included.²⁸ A newspaper report declared it to be “the biggest and most costly pre-planned centre in New Zealand.”²⁹

Its design was evocative of Plischke’s original plan. The new scheme comprised a series of pedestrian courts, enabling shoppers to move about free from the traffic hazards of a normal shopping street. Car parks were sited around the edge of the precinct and service lanes ran behind shops. Later, even the campanile element of the original design found expression, in the form of the post office clock tower. As with Plischke’s scheme, this one integrated transport, commercial and cultural amenities. The main axis ran from the railway station, through the main shopping courts, to the Olympic pool. As one official explained:

‘The relationship of the subway approaches and the bus station will enable shoppers arriving by bus or train to gain the cover of shop verandahs without being exposed to inclement weather. This relationship will also draw bus and train passengers into the shopping area.’³⁰

In September 1953 the Department of Crown Lands invited application for sites in the centre, with successful applicants having the option of either buying or leasing their land. They were responsible for building their premises, which had to be architecturally harmonious with one another. Restrictions were also placed on such things as the height of parapet walls and depth of verandahs. This resulted in a composition that, while sporting a diverse range of individual designs, was unified by the common use of the Modern Movement architectural style. This gave (and gives) the centre considerable streetscape appeal.³¹

²⁸ Memorandum for Director General of Lands from Commissioner of Crown Lands, 2 Nov 1951, AAMA 619, Acc W3109 16, Record 30/93, pt 1, ‘Housing Naenae 1951-1954’, Archives New Zealand.

²⁹ *Evening Post*, 29 Sept 1953.

³⁰ Memorandum for Director General of Lands from Commissioner of Crown Lands, 2 Nov 1951, AAMA 619, Acc W3109 16, Record 30/93, pt 1, ‘Housing Naenae 1951-1954’, Archives New Zealand.

³¹ Offering of Commercial Land: General Terms and Conditions, 29 Sept 1953, AAMA 619, Acc W3109 16, Record 30/93, pt 1, ‘Housing Naenae 1951-1954’, Archives New Zealand.

Because the shops were built in piecemeal fashion, there appears to have been no official opening of the centre, which was named Hillary Court after mountaineer Edmund Hillary. The last major building to be completed was the post office in 1962, architecturally the most distinctive in the whole complex – a status reflecting its importance in community life at this time.

Naenae Community Hall

Earlier, the community hall, Olympic pool and railway station were opened. The community hall was designed in a restrained modern style by the Wellington architectural practice of King, Cook and Dawson. It comprised an auditorium, kitchen, toilets and a few meeting rooms. It was opened on 7 August 1954 by the Internal Affairs minister William Bodkin, who declared: 'Every district needs a focal point where it can centre its activities and which can give a sense of identity to the district. Naenae has developed very rapidly in recent years, and the building of this centre is another step in providing the amenities required by an expanding community.'³² During the 1950s the facility was well utilised by the community: for dances, hobbies, sporting and other events.

Naenae Olympic Pool

The £100,000 Olympic-sized swimming pool was opened on 10 November 1956. The Lower Hutt City Council in co-operation with W. K. Cook, the principal architect of the community hall, designed it in a Modernist style in keeping with both the next-door hall and emerging Hillary Court. It comprised a 50 metre Olympic-sized pool – the only one in the region – a diving tower and refreshment facilities. The opening of the pool, announced Lower Hutt mayor Percy Dowse, completed council projects providing for the 'cultural, social and physical amenities' of the district begun five years before.³³

Naenae Railway Station

At the other end of the community centre's main axis, work was finishing on Naenae's new railway station. Ministry of Works architects designed it in a streamlined Modernist style in 1951; aesthetically and functionally it was an integral part of the community centre plan. While Plischke's original plan called for

³² 'Lower Hutt City Corporation, *Naenae Community Hall: souvenir brochure of the official opening by Minister of Internal Affairs, William Bodkin, on Saturday 7 August 1954, at 3:15pm, Lower Hutt, 1954*, IA 1 3148 Record 174/522 pt 2, Archives New Zealand.

³³ Two years later a new learners pool was also opened, this time by local MP and Prime Minister Walter Nash. Lower Hutt City Corporation, *Naenae olympic swimming pool: souvenir brochure of the official opening by his worship the mayor P. Dowse Esq, on Saturday 10 November, 1956, at 3:15pm, Lower Hutt, 1956*, p.1.

overbridge from the station to the shopping centre, the desire to shelter commuters from wind and rain saw a subway built instead.

Industrial Zone

The industrial zone was also progressing. Industries included clothing manufacturers; light and motor engineering; joinery factories, as well as plumbing and related trades. With the exception of the Philips (now Resene) factory, none of these enterprises were situated in the promised parkland. Most, however, were set back behind a grass verge rather than hard against the street, suggesting some acceptance of the parkland ideal. In any event the workshops and factories of the area ably fulfilled a key garden city concept of providing local employment opportunities.

Social development

Between 1945 and 1956 Naenae's population grew from 2,800 to 11,700. The suburb was demographically characterised by Pakeha families with small children – as were Epuni and Taita. In 1956, 77 per cent of Naenae's population was aged under 40, the highest proportion in the Wellington region.³⁴ Most families lived in state houses. By the late 1950s many churches had opened and a plethora of sporting, social and cultural groups were meeting a diversity of needs. While the 1954 Mazengarb report had highlighted the lack of amenities for teenagers in the district, the new community hall, swimming pool, cinema and Hillary Court were rectifying this lack. In other words, the community ideal of the Naenae's planners was coming to fruition, albeit in a different fashion to what they had envisaged. Some elements did not flourish.³⁵ Poor management and competition from private enterprise led to the collapse of the consumers' co-operative in 1969.³⁶

Subsequent history

Subsequent changes to Naenae's demographic profile reflected changes in government housing policy. From the early 1950s some tenants took advantage of generous terms and bought their state houses, but others left the suburb to build their dream home elsewhere. From this time too governments began redirecting state housing provision towards the poor and disadvantaged.³⁷ By the 1990s the area was largely characterised by low-income households, many of

³⁴ 'Population and Dwellings', *New Zealand census*, 1956.

³⁵ Schrader, 'Happy families', pp. 121-25.

³⁶ Nicola Balgrave and Greg Patmore, 'Practical Utopians: Rochdale Consumer Cooperatives in Australia and New Zealand', *Labour History*, November 2008, <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lab/95/balnave.html>

³⁷ Schrader, *We call it home*, pp. 47-48.

which comprised Maori and Pacific families.³⁸ As the suburb became poorer, Hillary Court experienced relative decline. Chain stores (such as Woolworths and Hannahs), the Regent cinema, and other shops closed, a trend encouraged by the centralisation of retailing in the Lower Hutt CBD. Since the early 2000s the Lower Hutt City Council has explored ways of revitalising the area.

Comparative analysis

A perennial theme in planning history is how the vision of planners are modified and compromised in the process of making them tangible. This is true of Naenae. Neither Plischke's spatial, nor Robertson's social, vision came to pass in the ways they had imagined. In viewing the cultural landscape of Naenae what is striking is not how far the vision departed from reality but how far reality met the vision. With its meandering street plan, pedestrian walkways, low-density housing, industries, community centre, consumers' co-operative and multiple public amenities, Naenae's spatial and social planning drew on the examples of Letchworth, Radburn and Greenbelt to create a uniquely New Zealand expression of the garden city ideal. While other settlements also drew on these ideas – such as Auckland's Tamaki state housing settlement – it was in Naenae where both the spatial and social aspects of the garden city ideal was most fully met.

Naenae stands out from other state housing schemes of this period – including Tamaki/Glen Innes, Hayes Paddock (Hamilton) and Savage Crescent (Palmerston North) – for its continued aesthetic integrity and scale. Hayes Paddock and Savage Crescent are much smaller than Naenae and since the 1990s have undergone considerable gentrification. Middle class homebuyers have sympathetically refurbished many former state houses, increasing the streetscape appeal and heritage value of both areas.³⁹ Gentrification is evident in Naenae, but not to the same extent. This is because it remains a low-income area and much of the housing stock is still state owned. Even so, most houses and other buildings are in near original condition or have been sensitively modified by their owners or the state. This is much less the case in the only directly comparable settlement: Tamaki/Glen Innes. Since 2002 the state has rebuilt much of this area and only pockets of the original fabric will soon remain.⁴⁰ This makes Naenae (and Taita and Epuni) the only state housing settlement of its scale and time that remains

³⁸ Naenae north and Naenae south community profiles, 1996 and 2001, Statistics New Zealand, www.stats.govt.nz

³⁹ Wintec, *The Houses of Hayes Paddock*, Hamilton, Ramp Press, Hamilton, 2008, pp. 9-22; Palmerston North City Council, *Savage Crescent Design Guidelines*, Palmerston North City Council, Palmerston North, 1996, p. 1.

⁴⁰ '\$52 million boost for Tamaki state housing', *New Zealand Herald*, 6 May 2009; http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10570589

significantly unchanged since it was built. Naenae remains a more fully-realised example of garden city design philosophy that Taita or Epuni, as the community centres in those two suburbs were not built.

However, it is evident that Naenae is on the cusp of change. The present (2010) National government is planning to reconfigure its state housing stock to better reflect tenant demand for larger and smaller dwellings.⁴¹ Because most Naenae state houses are two- or three-bedroom dwellings, it is likely that the suburb will soon face renewal pressures.

3.2. Physical Information

Current Description

A detailed study to identify boundaries that might form a future heritage precinct or precincts has not yet been undertaken. The following notes discuss some elements of the suburb that have been identified as being of particular heritage significance. The discussion also recommends elements for further investigation.

Community Centre

The Naenae community or civic centre comprises: Hillary Court, the railway station, Olympic pool, the community hall and Walter Mildenhall Park. It has very high historical, aesthetic and architectural significance.⁴² All elements should be recognised because each element makes a significant contribution to the ensemble. Losing any one of the elements would reduce the centre's heritage value. The community centre reflects the garden city ideal of a socially active and vital community life, a place where people shopped (consumers' co-op, Woolworths); socialised (Naenae Hotel); were entertained (Regent cinema); pursued interests, sports and hobbies (community hall and Mildenhall Park); exercised (Olympic pool and the Park); caught trains and buses (railway station), or hung about (the courts of Hillary Court). As well as garden city ideas the centre reflects European urbanism: Ernst Plischke's original design inspired by the pedestrianised, civic spaces of Venice.

Industrial Area

⁴¹ 'State house for life axed in review plan', *New Zealand Herald*, 25 Oct 2010
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10682899

⁴² The only building that diminishes the aesthetic and architectural value of the precinct is the three-storey structure opposite the post office.

This would benefit from an architectural survey. Most buildings are fairly utilitarian looking, but there are some that have architectural merit, such as the New World supermarket and a former factory on the corner of Gregory and Horlor streets. The former Phillips factory has high historical value. The Rembrandt Suit factory on Gregory St also has historical significance as being one of the oldest continuous enterprises in the area. A possible heritage designation might cover the Resene factory, Gregory and Horlor Street. These streets illustrate a central garden city tenet: that work should be available close to where people lived.

Residential areas

All of the residential streets in Naenae, including the layout of the roads (which respond to the natural topography of the area), have heritage value because they were part of the complete garden city design. Some, however, emphasise different aspects of the Naenae plan. Seddon Street is important in having the settlement's first block of shops – controlled by the consumers' co-operative. It features a diverse range of state houses, from single to multi-unit dwellings, and has the main entrance to Naenae Park. Seddon Street is also one of the original streets that served the Waddington small farms settlement.

Gibson Crescent is a good example of a curvilinear street; Collett Street features a small circus and a pedestrian walkway to Naenae Park; Judd Crescent has a range of houses of different ages; Bertram Grove features two-storey and semi-detached dwellings, and Rata Street has a range of houses in the English cottage style as well as a primary school. The streets highlight the low-density settlement pattern prescribed by garden city planning. While this was common for suburbia as a whole, Naenae is distinguished by the close integration of residential, industrial and civic land use functions.

Summary statement

At the heart of Naenae is the community centre. It was designed to be the commercial, social and cultural hub of Naenae, within easy walking distance of most residents' homes and next to the Wellington commuter rail line. It was the first suburban development to integrate transport, commercial and cultural functions within the one complex. Beside the community centre was the industrial zone, again within easy walking distance of the residents' homes, but also close to the railway station for workers travelling by train. Encircling the community centre and industrial area were residential districts comprising mostly single unit, stylistically distinct state houses on individual sections. These lined curvilinear streets varied in width to accommodate different traffic densities

and responded to the natural topography of the land – a radical departure from the usual grid plan of suburban streets. Scattered throughout the housing areas were ample parks and reserves that linked houses to schools and local shopping centres. These spatial arrangements and the social history attached to it make Naenae the most fully realised and cohesive example of the garden city ideal in New Zealand.

3.3. Sources

Sources Available and Accessed

The research for this report was largely drawn from Ben Schrader's MA thesis on the planning of Naenae between 1936 and 1956. This was based largely on primary sources held in Archives New Zealand, the Lower Hutt City Council, Housing New Zealand, the Lower Hutt City Library and the Alexander Turnbull Library. It also made use of oral testimony gained from early state housing tenants in the suburb. This piece of research remains the most scholarly and comprehensive study of the area. It contains a comprehensive bibliography so only new or important works and material are listed below.

New research was undertaken on the development of the Naenae community/civic centre and industrial area in the 1950s. Over 20 official files in Archives New Zealand were consulted, but only those used in the history section of this report are listed in the bibliography.

Archives New Zealand has further material that would fill out the story from the 1950s, as does the Lower Hutt City Council. New oral research would also be beneficial. Further research on Maori habitation of the area – including Te Mako pa and Wi Tako's tenure there – would strengthen the Maori association with the area.

The material assessed was reliable and supports the contention that Naenae has very high heritage value.

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IA 1 3148, Record 174/522 pt 2, Community Centre – Approval – Naenae, no date

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Vertical file: Naenae – comprising newspapers clippings and various articles

Photographic collection – comprising early photographs of Naenae

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Ben Schrader, 'Planning happy families: a history of the Naenae idea', MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1993

4. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT⁴³

This research report could inform a future registration proposal for a historic area.

When assessing historic heritage the New Zealand Historic Places Trust considers whether a place or area possesses any of the following values: aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

The following is a summary of the heritage values identified in the Naenae area, assessed using the criteria in Part II, Section 23 (1) of the *Historic Places Act 1993*.

4.1. Section 23 (1) Assessment

It is considered that this area has the potential to qualify as part of New Zealand's historic and cultural heritage. This area has been assessed for, and found to possess aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical, social, and traditional significance or value.

Aesthetic Significance or Value

Naenae has considerable aesthetic significance. This is reflected in its street plan and the careful arrangement of elements within it. It is based on garden city planning principles, where land use is defined by function and streets are arranged so they follow the topography of the site. The plan also features a series of walkways, which travel through parks and internal reserves so pedestrians could avoid busy streets. As with Ebenezer Howard's original model, Naenae's centre is given over to a community or civic centre, its position reflecting its role as the hub of community life. Secondary commercial centres and schools are placed so they are within easy walking or cycling distance of homes. The sum of these parts makes for an aesthetically pleasing whole.

⁴³For the relevant sections of the HPA see Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information.

The residential streetscape also has strong aesthetic value. While most houses are built in a common English cottage style, each is distinguished by different architectural treatments, meaning no house in the same part of a street is identical. The position of houses on sections also varies (to capture sun), increasing their streetscape appeal, especially where front gardens remain open to the street.

The arrangement of buildings and spaces in the community/civic centre is also appealing to the eye. The open spaces of Hillary Court are orientated along a northwest/southeast axis, which begins at the entrance of the Olympic Pool and ends at the Railway Station, visually integrating the three main components of the civic ensemble. While the buildings in the community centre comprise a range of forms and designs, they display aesthetic unity through the common use of materials (mainly concrete) and the employment of the Modern Movement architectural style.

Architectural Significance or Value

Naenae has a diverse and exemplary range of state houses built in the English cottage style introduced by the first Labour government in 1937. These include single-unit, semi-detached and multi-unit dwellings. These are mainly single storey, but there is also a scattering of double storey dwellings, such as in Gibson Cres. Many remain in original or near-original condition; others have been modified to suit modern lifestyles – such as the construction of decks to improve indoor-outdoor flow.

While most of the buildings in the industrial area are constructed in a utilitarian/vernacular style – simple gabled sheds with a front office – there are others that have architectural merit. This includes the former Philips (now Resene) Building, corner Naenae Rd and Vogel St, and a former factory on the corner of Horlor and Gregory streets. The last building is designed in a streamlined Modernist style and features windows angled in the manner of an aircraft control tower. The New World supermarket on Vogel St (a former factory) is distinctive for having a traditional zig-zag factory roof.

The architectural strength of community/civic centre lies more in the ensemble – comprising buildings designed in a common Modern Movement style – than in individual buildings. Even so, there are buildings of architectural merit, of which the post office is the best example. It is a single storey brick and concrete structure that stylishly turns the corner at the intersection of the two main

courts. At this point too rises a striking 15-metre high clock tower. (This is undoubtedly a reference to Ernst Plischke's campanile element in the original scheme.) The Olympic pool is another fine building. Its main facade is dominated by two horizontal bands of windows (a motif of the Modern Movement style) that are periodically broken by graceful pillars. The community hall is constructed in a restrained Modernist style, its rectangular form and single gable nicely referencing vernacular hall building traditions. The two-storey Naenae Hotel has both modernist and moderne influences, but it too successfully turns a corner and is a valuable addition to the ensemble. Significant too is the railway station. While blighted by neglect, it remains an elegant expression of the Modern Movement idiom.

The aesthetic and architectural value of Naenae is enhanced by the fact that the suburb has not faced the redevelopment pressures that, for example, Auckland's Glen Innes has – where much of the 1950s and 1960s fabric has been demolished.

Cultural Significance or Value

Naenae has high cultural significance. At the core of the garden city planning ideal was a deep cultural anxiety that modern city life was alienating and degenerate. Naenae's planners wanted to create settlements that they thought characterised the close community bonds of rural and small town life. They designed spaces to promote face-to-face encounters and social interaction and set up institutions (community centres, consumer's co-operatives) to encourage residents to put down roots and become active in their communities – what we now call social capital. These ideas were strongly associated with the avant-garde and political left. It is no coincidence that they were picked up by the first Labour government, who saw garden city planning as a way to transform the culture of cities. Naenae's planning had a utopian edge (in the manner of a Brave New World), which subsequent planned settlements lacked. This makes its cultural landscape a very important contribution to the history of socialism, political thinking and urban planning in New Zealand.

Historical Significance or Value

Naenae has very high historical significance. It boasts a number of New Zealand firsts. The Hutt Valley Development Scheme, of which Naenae was a part, was first attempt to build a settlement the size of small city. Until then, towns and cities had grown streets or blocks at a time. Building on this scale had nev-

er been tried before and its success opened the way for the development of whole suburbs and large cities at a time – as in Porirua and Manukau. Naenae’s community centre was the first to integrate transport, retailing, hospitality, professional, and community services within the one complex. Hillary Court was also New Zealand’s first pedestrian mall.

Key figures in the planning of Naenae enhance its historical value. These include the Modern Movement architect Ernst Plischke; politicians Peter Fraser, Walter Nash, Arnold Nordmeyer, and Clarence Skinner; local politicians Jack Andrews and Percy Dowse; prominent Wellington lawyer Richard Simpson, and the consumers’ co-operative and community activist William Robertson.

Naenae’s industrial area not only illustrates an important aspect of garden city planning – the provision of local employment opportunities – but also the post-World War Two rise of manufacturing following the 1938 introduction of import licensing. This encouraged import substitution industries like Naenae’s Phillips (electrical) factory, now Resene paints.

Naenae highlights how overseas models of urbanism have been adapted in a New Zealand context. As the most complete expression of both the social and spatial aspects of the garden city ideal, the settlement takes a central place in the history of New Zealand planning and urbanism. With environmentalism now making a return and being expressed in New Urbanist towns like Auckland’s Flat Bush, Naenae shows the search for community in New Zealand cities is by no means a new one. Using the built environment to explain how community was realised in mid-twentieth century Naenae provides insights that can help us to better understand the cultures of the cities we live in.

Social Significance or Value

The social significance of Naenae lies in the story of its transformation from a market garden area to a modern state suburb showcasing garden city planning principles. This story emphasises the role of the government, planners (such as Ernst Plischke) and ‘community builders’ (such as William Robertson) in the construction of both the physical and social fabric of the suburb. The drama lies in the dedication and tenacity of officials and residents to forge a model garden city-type community, the obstacles they faced in realising their vision, and the ways they were able to modify it when circumstances changed. The story departs from the normal narrative of urban/suburban development in the type of social amenities planners and residents sought to provide, including state

health clinics, consumers' co-operatives, and a community centre that they hoped would become the social hub of community life. What distinguishes the Naenae story is the extent to which the government, planners and many residents genuinely believed they were pioneering a new way of living that combined the best of town and country life. There was no other mid-twentieth century settlement that was informed by such a high level of idealism. This makes it an important story in New Zealand's social and urban history.

The outcome of the postal ballots supporting the community centre rating and the high proportion of residents who joined the consumers' co-operative showed the planning scheme had widespread support among residents. While further research is required to examine how residents used the amenities, photographic evidence from the 1950s and 1960s show both Hillary Court and the Olympic Pool buzzing with people, suggesting that these amenities became important hubs of community life.

Traditional Significance or Value

Naenae was the site of Te Mako pa, where the important Te Ati Awa leader Wi Tako lived for nearly 30 years until 1880. There he built a pataka called Nuku Tewhatewha to symbolise his support for a Maori king. This is now exhibited in TheNewDowse museum.

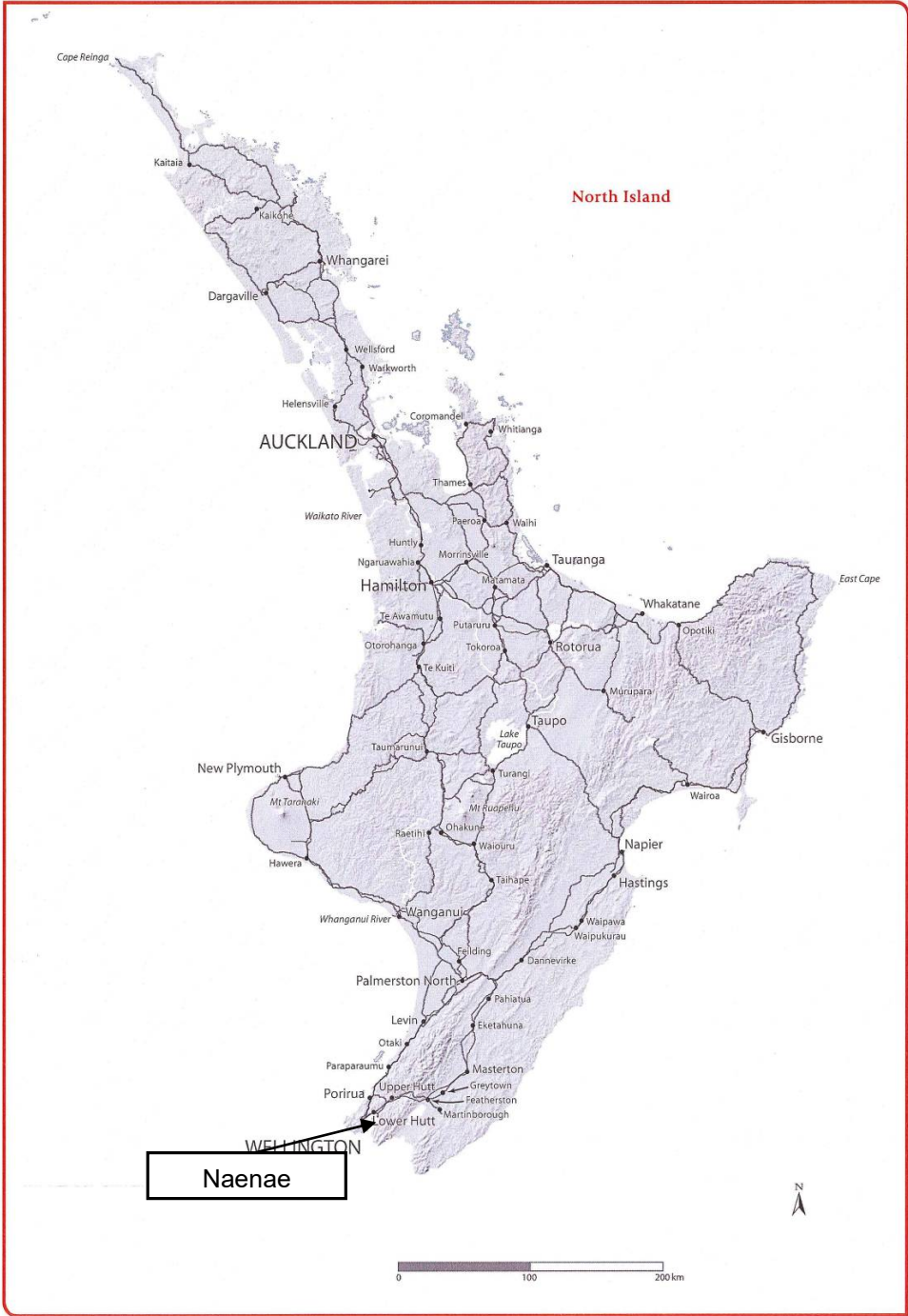
Disclaimer

Please note that this assessment by the NZHPT identifies only the heritage values of the property/area concerned, and should not be construed as advice on the state of the properties, or as a comment of their soundness or safety, including in regard to earthquake risk, safety in the event of fire, or insanitary conditions.

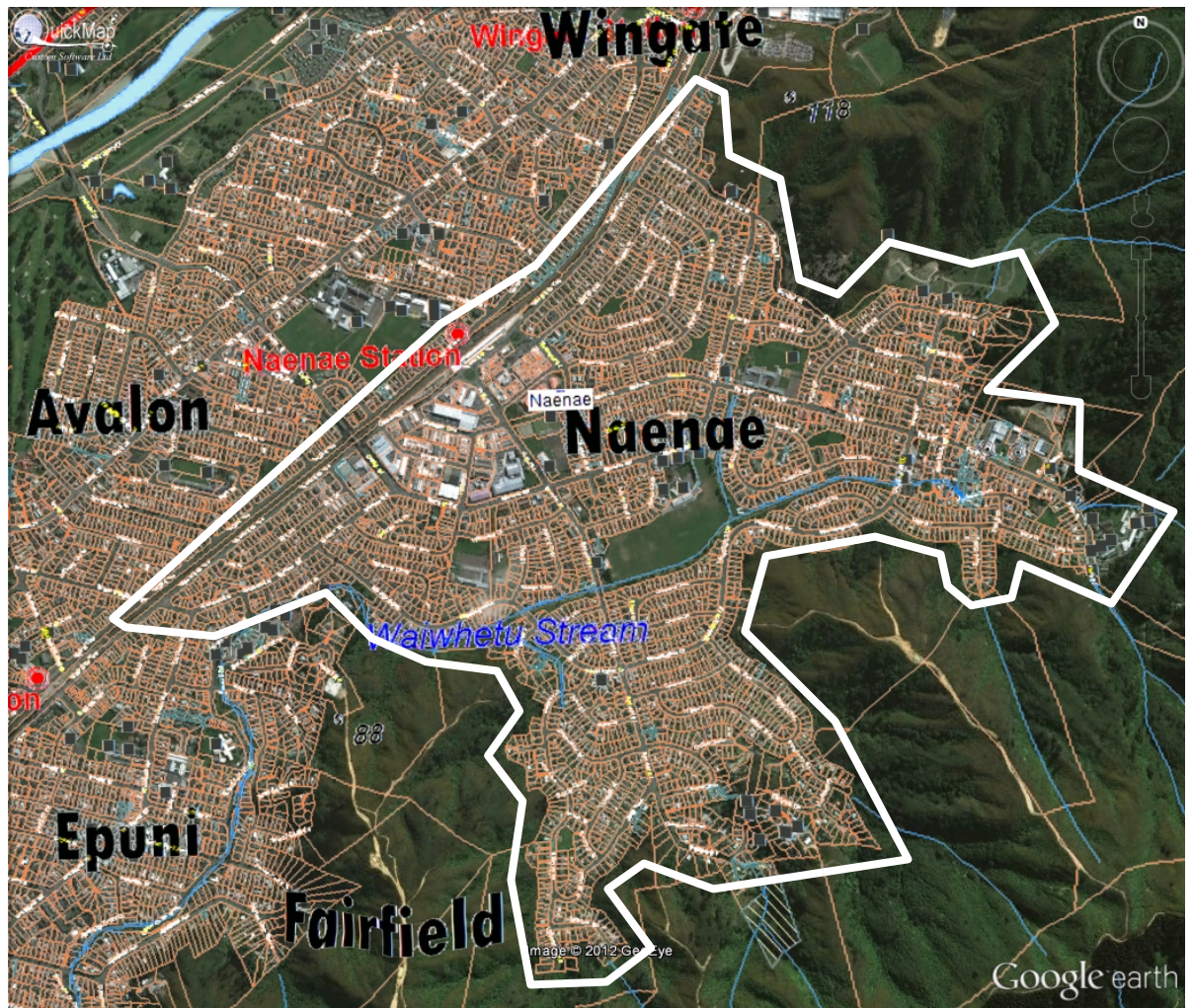
5. APPENDICES

5.1. Appendix 1: Visual Identification Aids

Location Maps



General extent of area assessed as contributing to heritage values



(Approximate – please note that more detailed investigation is required to accurately assess the boundaries of the area contributing to the historic heritage values identified).

5.2. Appendix 2: Visual Aids to Historical Information

Historical Plans



Figure 1: Plan of Radburn. (Source: Stanley Buder, *Visionaries and planners: the garden city movement and the modern community*, Oxford, 1990. P. 107)

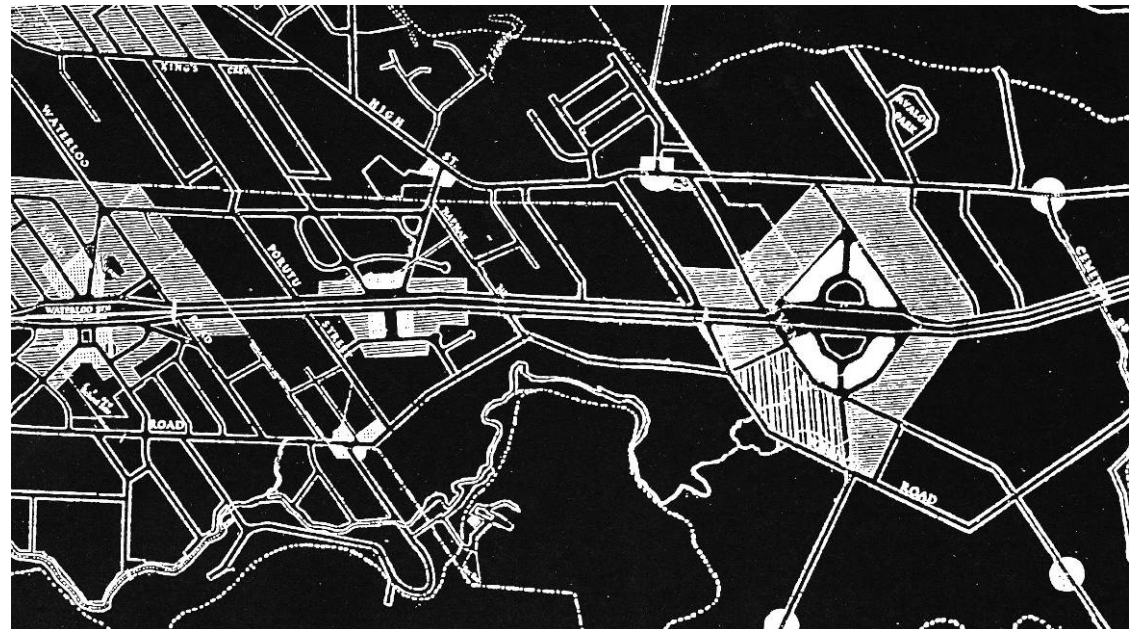


Figure 2: Mawson's 1942 plan of Naenae (Source: Ernst Plischke, *On the human aspect of modern architecture*, Vienna, 1969, p. 111.)

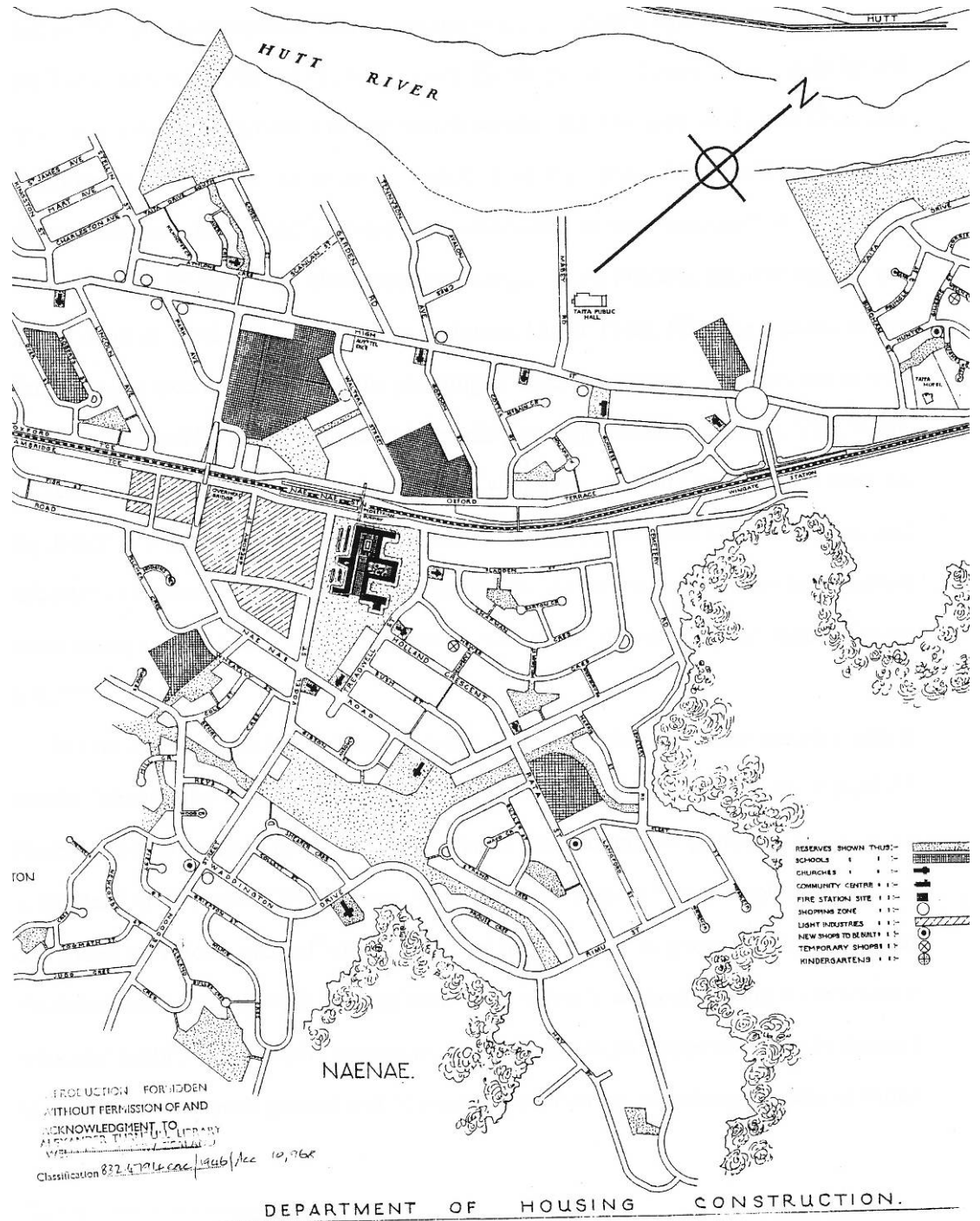


Figure 3: Plischke's 1946 plan of Naenae (Source: Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref 832.4794EAC[1946]Acc10968)

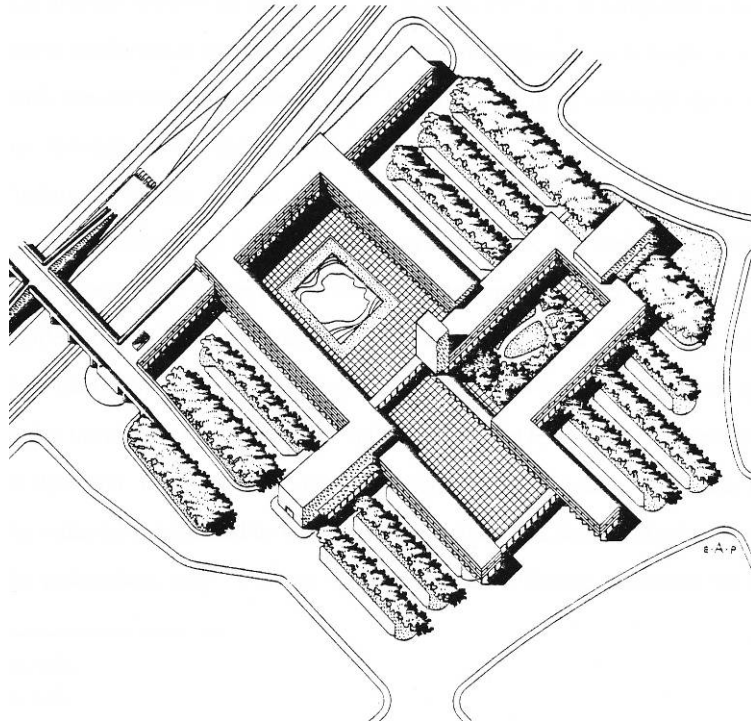


Figure 4: Plischke's original community centre proposal. (Source: Plischke, *On the human*, p. 113)

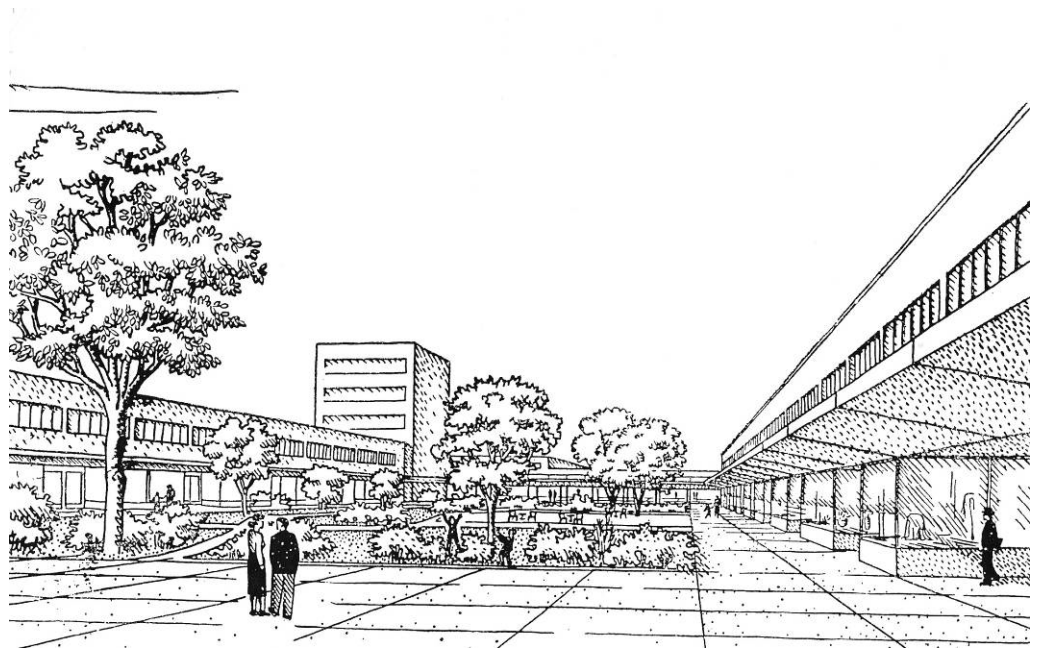


Figure 5: View across main court – note pilotis replaced by verandahs. (Source: *On the human*, p. 115)

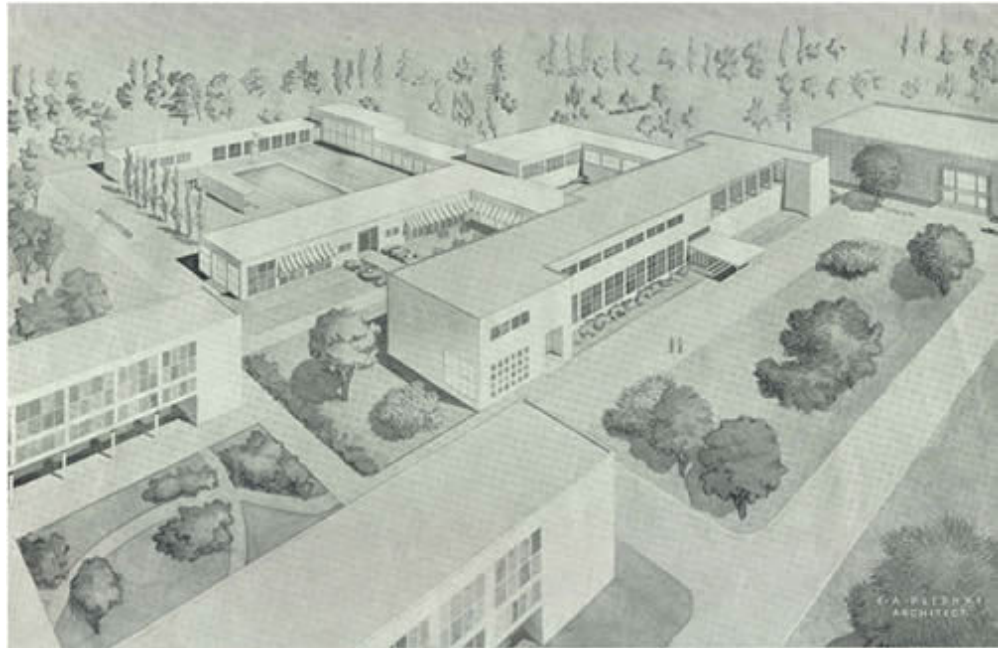
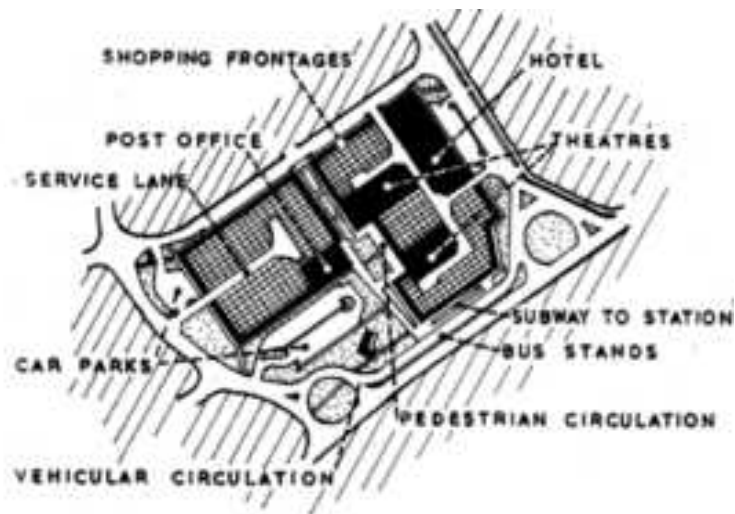


Figure 6: Plischke's revised community centre plan. (Source: Nash 1535 00466-0520, 29/2, 'Community Centres', Archives New Zealand)



*Above: KEY PLAN.
Left: TWO VIEWS OF MODEL.
See Front Cover for Further View.*

Figure 7: Ministry of Works 1953 plan for Naenae community centre, (Source: Design revive, Vol 4: No 6, 1953, <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Arc0406DesR-t1-body-d8.html>)



Figure 8: Model of Naenae community centre, 1953, as published in the *Evening Post* (Source: Hutt Valley Heritage Centre, Petone)

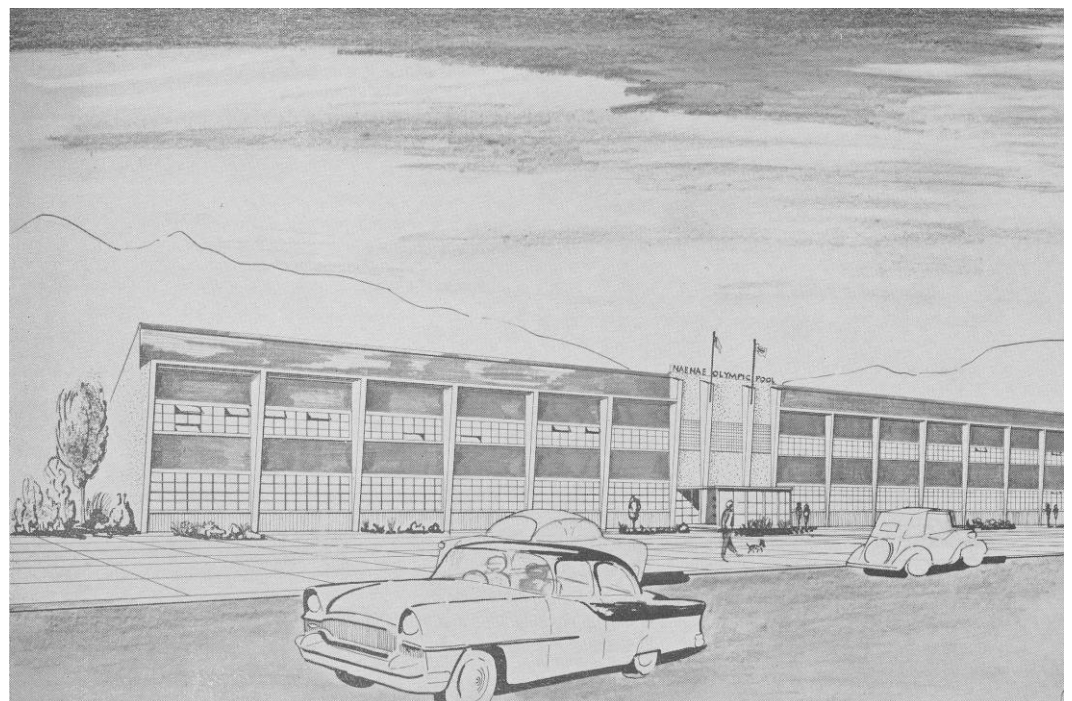


Figure 9: Elevation of Naenae Olympic Swimming Pool. (Source: Hutt Valley Heritage Centre, Petone)

Historical Photographs



Figure 10: View across Naenae, 1947 (Source: AALF 6112, Archives New Zealand)



Figure 11: Seddon Street shops, 1947 (Source: AALF 6112, Archives New Zealand)

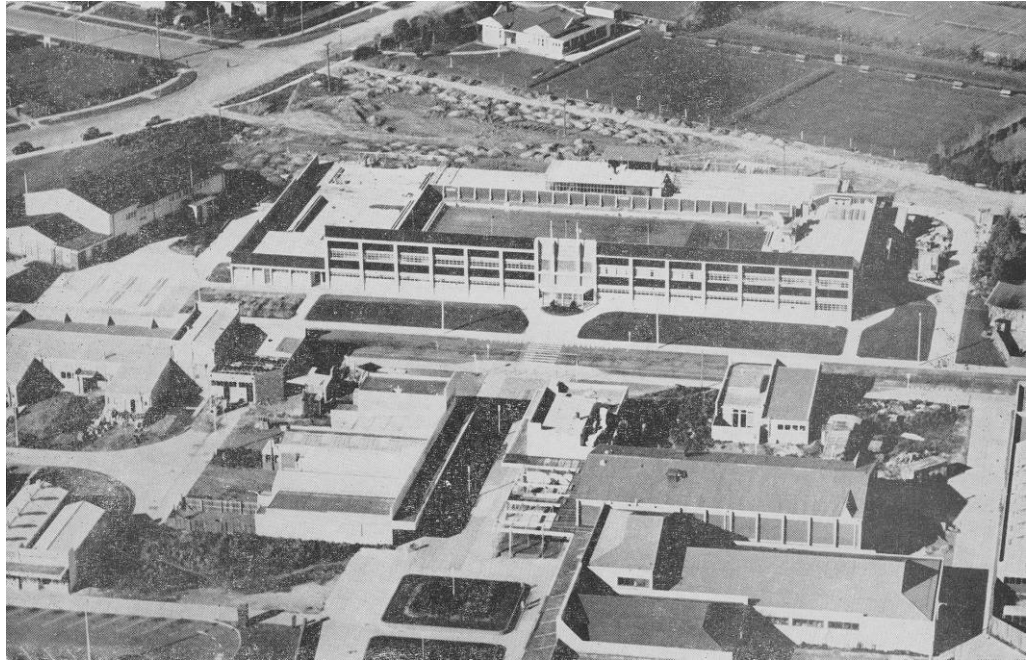


Figure 12: Aerial view across Hillary Court, 1958 (Source: Hutt Valley Heritage Centre, Petone)

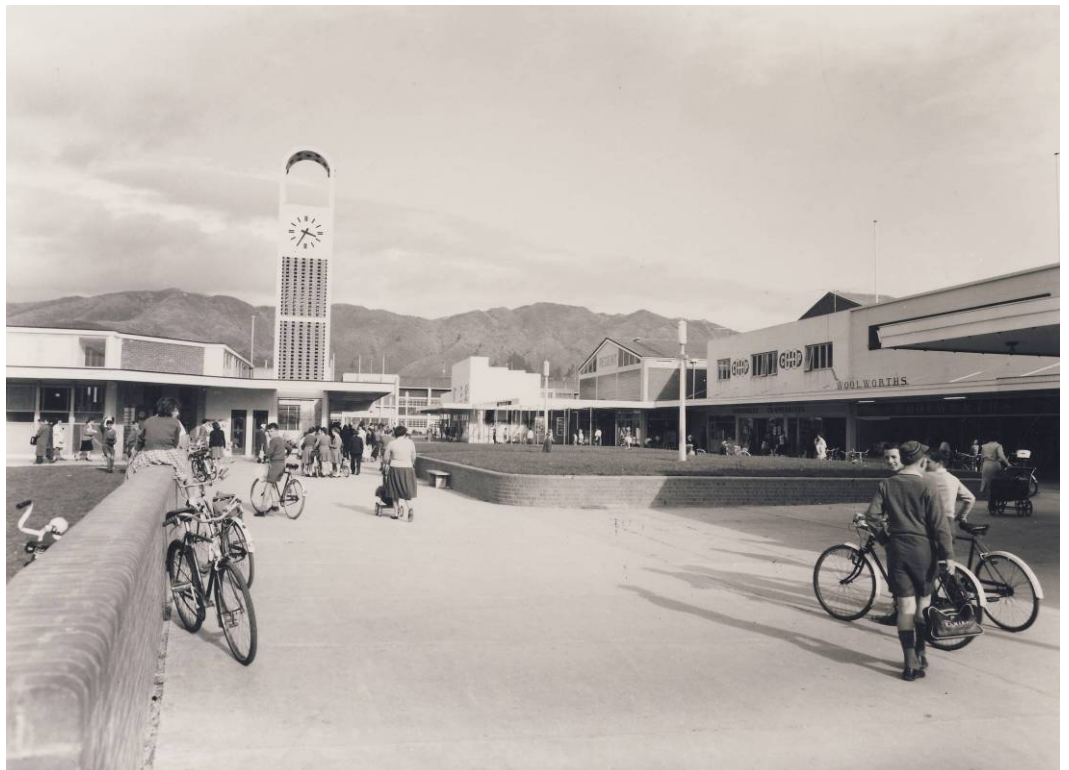


Figure 13: Hillary Court, 1962 (Source: Hutt Valley Heritage Centre, Petone)

5.3. Appendix 3: Visual Aids to Physical Information

Current Photographs of Area

(All photographs taken in June 2010, Ben Schrader, NZHPT)



Figure 14: Shearer Cres circus (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 15: View highlighting curvilinear street pattern (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 16: Finger of reserve in Naenae Park (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 17: Naenae Park (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 17: Seddon Street shops (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 18: Naenae Community Hall (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 19: Naenae Olympic Pool (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 20: Naenae Post Office (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 21: Naenae Hotel (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 22: Naenae Railway Station (Source: Ben Schrader)



Figure 23: Factory in Naenae industrial zone (Source: Ben Schrader)

5.4. Appendix 5: Significance Assessment Information

Part II of the Historic Places Act 1993

Chattels or object or class of chattels or objects (section 22(5))

Under section 22(5) of the Historic Places Act 1993, an entry in the Register in respect of any historic place may include any chattel or object or class of chattels or objects –

- (a) Situated in or on that place; and
- (b) Considered by the Trust to contribute to the significance of that place; and
- (c) Nominated by the Trust.

Significance or value (section 23(1))

Under section 23(1) of the Historic Places Act 1993, the Trust may enter any historic place or historic area in the Register if the place possesses aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero – Report for a Historic Place **Naenae Post Office (Former), Lower Hutt (List No. 9806, Category 1)**



Naenae Post Office (Former), 13 November 2019
Photograph by Kerryn Pollock, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

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Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence to support the inclusion of Naenae Post Office (Former) in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero as a Category 1 historic place.

Summary

The Naenae Post Office (Former) is located in Hillary Court in the Lower Hutt suburb of Naenae and opened in December 1959. The graceful 14.3 metre tower made the post office an immediate landmark and it remains the suburb's most arresting building. It was constructed to serve the burgeoning population of the innovative and now historically-significant state housing suburb of Naenae. The Post Office Department provided communication and financial services that New Zealanders used on a daily basis and the building's site was the most prominent site in Hillary Court, reflecting the position of the post office in community life.

The post office was planned to be an architectural feature of Hillary Court and its designers, the Ministry of Works under Government Architect Gordon Wilson and District Architect John Blake-Kelly, succeeded in this aim. It remains the keystone building in the complex. It demonstrates a transition from Bauhaus-influenced international modernism towards the Brutalist architectural style, using high quality materials and fixtures, and is the best example of a small modernist post office from this period in New Zealand. The place's high aesthetic value is exemplified by the dramatic contrast between the strong horizontal lines of the building and the soaring verticality of its tower. It is technically significant as the first post office tower built after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake.

Naenae Post Office (Former) served as a business and social hub for the local community almost 60 years. The high quality of its design and construction symbolised the importance of the post office in daily life and its 2015 closure conversely represents the institution's rapid decline since the early 2000s. With the purpose-built post office a vanishing building type in New Zealand, the historical and cultural significance of this building already increases.

1. IDENTIFICATION¹

1.1. Name of Place

Name:

Naenae Post Office (former)

1.2. Location Information

Address

27 Hillary Court

Naenae

LOWER HUTT

Local Authority

Hutt City Council

1.3. Legal Description

Sec 1 SO 24113 and Pt Lot 1 DP 15073 (RT WN33C/287) and Legal Road, Wellington Land District

1.4. Extent of List Entry

Extent includes the land described as Sec 1 SO 24113 and Pt Lot 1 DP 15073 (RT WN33C/287) and part of the land described as Legal Road, Wellington Land District, and the building known as Naenae Post Office (Former) thereon, including the verandas. (Refer to map in Appendix 1 of the List entry report for further information).

1.5. Eligibility

There is sufficient information included in this report to identify this place. This place is physically eligible for consideration as a historic place. It consists of a building fixed to land which lies within the territorial limits of New Zealand.

1.6. Existing Heritage Recognition

Hutt City District Plan Operative (24 June 2003, as updated), Item E3, Appendix Heritage 2 in Chapter 14F Heritage Buildings and Structures. Demolition or relocation of part or all of a building or structure are discretionary activities.

¹ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1. Historical Information

Early History

Before 1840 Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington) was heavily forested. The region was named for Tara, the first person to settle there. During the 17th century his descendants were joined by Ngāti Ira; other iwi also settled for different lengths of time. From the 1820s people from Taranaki (Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama, and Te Āti Awa) migrated to the region.² In the early 1830s Patukawenga of Ngāti Mutunga gifted the area east of the Heretaunga (Hutt) River to the recently-arrived Te Āti Awa leader Wīremu Tako Ngātata (Wī Tako).³ It may have been at this time that Te Mako pā at Naenae was founded.⁴ It was located at the corner present-day Daysh Street and Park Avenue and might have been used as a base for Te Āti Awa cultivations and food gathering sites in the district.⁵ In the early 1850s Wī Tako moved from Wellington to the (unoccupied) Te Mako pā site, where he built a large European-styled house. In 1856 he commissioned Horonuku of Tūwharetoa to build a pātaka (storehouse) to show his support for a Māori King.⁶ In 1861 Wī Tako leased Te Mako to settler William Beetham, who lived there until his death in 1888. The house was subsequently consumed by fire.⁷

Following the First World War, the Reform government established a poultry and market garden settlement for partially disabled servicemen in Naenae and the area became Wellington's main market garden.⁸ In the late 1930s the Labour government proclaimed the

² Chris McLean, 'Wellington region- Early Māori history', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2015, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-region/page-5> (accessed 23 Sept 2019).

³ Morrie Love, 'Te Āti Awa of Wellington', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2005, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-ati-awa-of-wellington> (accessed 23 Sept 2019).

⁴ The date of the founding of Te Mako pā is unknown. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Wī Tako founded it after being gifted the land to cement his people's claim to it.

⁵ The pā location is based on Te Āti Awa oral tradition as told by Kura Moeahu (Waiwhetū Marae chairperson) in a public talk at Naenae Library on 20 Sept 2019. Moeahu also spoke of the former Rau-manuka cultivations at Naenae. A 1941 history of Lower Hutt Borough placed the location further east, near the corner of Daysh Street and Naenae Road. Lower Hutt Borough Council, *Lower Hutt: Past and Present*, Hutt News, Lower Hutt, 1941, p. 25 and map on rear inset. <https://library.huttcity.mebooks.co.nz/text/LowHutt/thumbnails.html> (accessed 23 Sept 2019).

⁶ The pātaka was later shifted to Beetham's Wairarapa pastoral estate. The family donated it to the Dowse Art Gallery in 1982, where it remains in 2019. A. R. Cairns, 'Ngatata, Wiremu Tako', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 1990, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1n10/ngatata-wiremu-tako> (accessed 17 Sept 2019). The Dowse Art Museum, 'Nuku Tewhatewha' <http://dowse.org.nz/exhibitions/detail/nuku-tewhatewha> (accessed 17 Sept 2019).

⁷ There are competing dates for the conflagration. The above Dowse website says 1888 and the above 1941 history says 1928. The fire is not mentioned in the Papers Past website in either year.

⁸ David Millar, *Once Upon a Village: A History of the Hutt Valley*, Wellington, New Zealand University Press for the Lower Hutt City Corporation, 1972, p. 135.

land as the site for its new state housing scheme.⁹ Market gardeners relocated to Ōtaki, and Naenae and its neighbouring communities of Epuni and Taitā were built as state housing suburbs.

The spatial and social planning of these suburbs was strongly informed by garden city ideology. Naenae is the best realisation of this planning idea in New Zealand and its most innovative social housing suburb.¹⁰ The scheme's lead planner was the prominent architect Ernst Plischke, 'one of the foremost early exponents of modernism in New Zealand architecture'.¹¹ Streets, services and amenities were designed to encourage social interaction and the development of a community spirit. This was especially evident in Naenae. Its 1943 plan featured a substantial community centre designed in the modernist style. This was based on St Mark's Square in Venice and included pedestrian squares, shops, offices, public amenities, and a tower (akin to a campanile) to relieve the horizontal line of the buildings.¹²

Due to the pressure to build houses first, the community centre was delayed until 1951. By then Plischke had left government service and other Ministry of Works (MOW) architects finalised the plan. Most of the space would be given over to shops, but it would also include a cinema, hotel and professional offices. It was to be New Zealand's biggest and most costly pre-planned centre and its first comprehensively planned commercial centre and purpose-built pedestrian mall.¹³ The form owed much to Plischke's original plan of pedestrian courts with car parking assigned to the centre's edges. The centre's main axis ran from the railway station, through the shopping court, to the Olympic swimming pool. In 1953 the government invited applications for sites in the complex. All buildings had to be constructed in a modernist style and have common parapet and veranda heights. These restrictions increased both architectural unity and streetscape appeal of the complex. The centre was built in a piecemeal fashion in the following years and named Hillary Court after the national hero Edmund Hillary, who had recently been the first person to summit Mt Everest.¹⁴

⁹ Ben Schrader, 'Planning Happy Families: A History of the Naenae Idea', MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1993, p. 82.

¹⁰ Ben Schrader, *We Call it Home: A History of State Housing in New Zealand*, Auckland, Reed, 2005, p. 170.

¹¹ Linda Tyler, Plischke, Ernst Anton', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2000, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5p31/plischke-ernst-anton> (accessed 7 May 2019).

¹² Ernst Plischke, *Design and Living*, Wellington, Department of Internal Affairs, 1947, pp. 6–71; Schrader, 2005, p. 171.

¹³ Schrader, 2005, p.175; Gael Ferguson, *Building the New Zealand Dream*, Wellington, The Dunmore Press Limited with the assistance of the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1994, p.147.

¹⁴ Memorandum for Director General of Lands from Commissioner of Crown Lands, 2 Nov 1951, AAMA 619, Acc W3109 16, Record 30/93, pt 1, 'Housing Naenae 1951-1954', Archives New Zealand; Offering of Commercial Land: General Terms and Conditions, 29 Sept 1953, AAMA 619, Acc W3109 16, Record 30/93, pt 1, 'Housing Naenae 1951-1954', Archives New Zealand.

Post Office

The post office site was the last to be developed. From the late 1940s the Post and Telegraph Department experienced rapid growth, spurred by increasing demand for its communication and financial services.¹⁵ This made it among the largest and most widely spread businesses in New Zealand. As the Postmaster General Walter Broadfoot stated in 1954, the post office was ‘closely bound up with the economic and social life of the country. Its activities concern every business, every family unit, and every citizen.’¹⁶ The importance of the post office in national life was reinforced by the fact that official distances were measured from one post office to the next.

The post office had long been a social hub in communities – a place to post letters, bank, or chat with neighbours – and was typically among the most impressive public buildings.¹⁷ As the Postmaster General again explained:

“The post office is often one of the architectural features of a town or suburb and because of this an effort is always made to ensure the building is aesthetically pleasing. In planning the layout of a commercial area in new suburbs, the planner usually endeavours to make the post office the focal point. This in turn calls for a high standard of design in planning the building.”¹⁸

The first post office in Naenae was an ex-Army building that was located on the corner of Seddon Street and Naenae Road from 1946. With the state housing suburb growing rapidly the facility soon became inadequate.¹⁹ In December 1955, the Commissioner of Works sold a parcel of Crown land in Hillary Court to the Post and Telegraph Department.²⁰ In line with the

Zealand.

¹⁵ The services included: postal, telegraph, savings bank, social security benefits, income tax forms, motor car registration, radio licensing, and overseas money orders. The 1950s annual reports of the Post and Telegraph department all highlight the institution’s incessant growth. See, for example: ‘Annual Report of the Post and Telegraph Department’, *Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1858, F-1, p. 26.

¹⁶ ‘Annual Report of the Post and Telegraph Department’, *AJHR*, 1954, F-1, p. 3.

¹⁷ Tim Shoebidge, ‘Mail and Couriers – Mail on the Steam Era, 1850s-1890s’, *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2010, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/mail-and-couriers/page-2> (accessed 3 Aug 2018).

¹⁸ ‘Annual Report of the Post and Telegraph Department’, *AJHR*, 1960, F-1 Wellington, p. 28.

¹⁹ ‘Notes for the use of the Postmaster General while Officiating at the Laying of the Foundation Stone, new Post Office at Naenae, 10:15am, 1 May 1959, AAMF W3327 909 Box 142 Rec No 30/642, Historical Files Regarding Post Offices – Naenae, 1959-1985, Archives New Zealand.

²⁰ ‘Memorandum’, 12 Dec 1955, ACHL 19111 W1 463,201/1269/1 part 1, Archives New Zealand.

aforementioned policy, the corner site was the most prominent in the whole development, situated at the nexus of the precinct's two main axes. The first design was completed in August 1956 and overseen by the Government Architect Gordon Wilson and District Architect John Blake-Kelly. As well as accommodating post office functions – mail room, public service area, staff offices – the initial design included a health clinic at the building's northern end.²¹

Architecture

The Naenae Post Office was part of a wider shift in modernist architecture in New Zealand that was reflected in public buildings, including post offices. Those designed in the early 1950s showed a strong Bauhausian influence (as evolved in post-war New Zealand), exemplified by the massing of forms like stairwells at post offices in Feilding (1950) and Hokitika (1953) or the austere, Le Corbusian-influenced, lines of buildings like the Taitā Post Office (1958). Naenae displayed the beginnings of a move from this international modernism to Brutalism, a change Wilson was championing with other buildings like The Terrace Flats (1959).²²

Wilson had been appointed chief architect of the Department of Housing Construction in 1936 and oversaw major state housing projects, including the Berhampore Flats (1939-40; List No. 7432) and the award-winning Dixon Street Flats (1941-44; List No. 7395) in Wellington, and the Greys Avenue Flats in Auckland (1945-47; List No. 583).²³ He remained chief architect when Department of Housing Construction was folded into the MOW in 1943 and was appointed Government Architect in 1952. Wilson was a highly active and interventionist leader 'who had a strong influence on all the work of the architectural office', and the Naenae Post Office was no exception.²⁴

The Naenae design owes much to Aquinas Hall at Otago University (1954) designed by Ted McCoy, who was strongly influenced by the work of early British Brutalist architects like

²¹ 'Proposed Post Office Nae Nae', AAMA W3109 619 Box 16 30/93 part 3, Housing – Naenae – Commercial Area – Town Centre, Archives New Zealand.

²² Later named the Gordon Wilson Flats.

²³ Julia Gatley, 'Wilson, Francis Gordon', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 2000. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5w36/wilson-francis-gordon> (accessed 7 January 2020). The Dixon Street Flats once the New Zealand Institute of Architects Gold Award in 1947.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Alison and Peter Smithson.²⁵ Aquinas Hall featured a white painted concrete frame with regular window bands and red brick infill walls; the Naenae Post Office bears the same white plastered concrete frame, red brick infill walls and geometric window bands.²⁶

Clock Tower

Naenae's most prominent feature was to be a slab-like, free-standing clock tower. These had been a standard element in larger post offices from the 1860s, rising either at the middle or corner of the building and often indicating the public entrance below. They were major landmarks, expressing the importance of the post office in daily life and signalling the passage of the commercial day. The 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake highlighted the risk such towers posed to the public if they collapsed. This led to a discontinuation of post office tower building and the removal or reduction of some existing towers, such as those on Palmerston North and Wellington's chief post offices.²⁷

The inclusion of a tower at Naenae was initially opposed by the post office management. The department's policy at that time was not to build towers and there was concern a precedent would be set.²⁸ The Commissioner of Works pointed out that the demolition of clock towers had been due to their seismic risk and not because 'the community no longer desired them.' He explained that the Hutt Valley was lacking in vertical features and there was nothing to visually signal Hillary Court's location: 'A modest feature in the new Post Office would relieve the horizontal monotony and make the building a focal point. Its function would be emphasised and anonymity replaced with distinction'.²⁹ Naenae's circumstances were unusual and it wouldn't be regarded as precedent-setting.

²⁵ Michael Findlay, 'Aquinas Hall', in Julia Gatley, ed, *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture 1904-1984*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2008, p. 68.

²⁶ Aquinas Hall became nationally prominent when it won a NZIA Gold Medal in 1956, but MOW architects would have been aware of it even before then. It in turn clearly influenced the design of the new Stratford post office (1964).

²⁷ 'Report for the Post and Telegraph Department for the Year 1931-32', *AJHR*, 1932, F-1, p.3; 'Report for the Post and Telegraph Department for the Year 1932-33', *AJHR*, 1933, F-1, p.2; 'Report for the Post and Telegraph Department for the Year 1945-46', *AJHR*, 1946, F-1, p.7; 'Report for the Post and Telegraph Department for the Year 1946-47', *AJHR*, 1947, p.6; 'Post Office Clocks Towers to Come Down', *Evening Post*, 26 January 1944, p.7. Nash stated at the Naenae Post Office opening that following a 'series of disastrous earthquakes' that 'wrecked or damaged several Post Office towers', others 'were pulled down in the interests of safety.' 'Notes for Prime Minister: Opening of New Post Office, Naenae, 1959', AEFZ W5727 22620 Box 184, Record No 212/0453-0457, Archives New Zealand.

²⁸ Director General to Commissioner of Works, 23 Nov 1956, AATE 889 W3323 7 26/1/64 part 1, Wellington-Hutt District: Naenae Post Office, Archives New Zealand.

²⁹ Commissioner of Works to Director General, 1 Mar 1957, AATE 889 W3323 7 26/1/64 part 1, Wellington-Hutt District: Naenae Post Office, Archives New Zealand.

The Director General was persuaded by the explanation and agreed to an exception being made, which signified the influence of the government architects.³⁰ The need for a vertical landmark to signal Naenae's commercial hub had been recognised by Ernst Plischke, who had included a tower or campanile in his 1943 design for Naenae's community centre. Gordon Wilson understood its aesthetic value and ensured Plischke's idea was carried over into the revised Naenae commercial centre scheme.

The clock tower symbolised past and modern times simultaneously. Following tradition, it was sited to one side of the building and near the building entrance. Rising 47 feet high (14.3 metres), it dominated the Naenae townscape. But in light of the Hawke's Bay earthquake of 1931 and departmental policy, consideration of seismic issues was paramount. New thought about the tower's placement in relation to the rest of the building was required and unlike in earlier post offices, the tower was not fully integrated into the rest of the building, which was seen to reduce the seismic risk.³¹ This combined with a reinforced concrete frame permitted the existence of its slender form.

As predicted, the tower did not lead to a flurry of other ones elsewhere. Neither the new Masterton (1961) nor Stratford (1964) post offices included towers. It was not until the 1970s that clock towers re-emerged as a feature of new post office buildings, most notably the brutalist Nelson Post Office (1976).³² This made the Naenae Post Office unique in the 1950s and 1960s. The simplicity of its form and the arrangement of materials gave the tower an elegance that was arguably unsurpassed by any similar structure in the period; the Palmerston North Clock Tower in The Square (1957) was its closest rival but this was demolished in the early 2000s and rebuilt anew.³³

Construction and Opening

The construction contract was awarded to J. M. Construction in September 1958 with a bid of £32,000 (equivalent to \$1.49 million in 2019).³⁴ The need for a health clinic in the building

³⁰ Director General to Commissioner of Works, 27 June 1957, AATE 889 W3323 7 26/1/64 part 1, Wellington-Hutt District: Naenae Post Office, Archives New Zealand.

³¹ 'Notes for the use of the Postmaster General.' Note that there is no detailed information on the precise nature of the technology and design advances in departmental files at Archives New Zealand.

³² Julia Gatley, *Athfield Architects*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2012, p. 111. The Nelson post office tower incorporated the clock from the previous 1906 building, demolished as an earthquake risk in 1970. Another post office that included a clock tower was Levin (1983).

³³ Peter Cunningham, 'Hopwood Clock Tower – ECI Enables Innovation', *Build Magazine*, Feb/Mar 2011, pp.24-25.

³⁴ There were eight tenders and J. M. Construction put in the lowest bid. Commissioner of Works to Director General, 26 Sep

had passed and this area was converted into a shop until the space was required for post office use. The foundation laying ceremony was held on 1 May 1959 and the building was opened on 4 December by the Post Office Director General Michael Moohan. Also in attendance was the Prime Minister Walter Nash. He had been a driving force in the development of Naenae since 1944 and, as the local Member of Parliament, had retained a strong interest in its continuing growth.³⁵ He told the assembled crowd that the new building was the 'last piece in the mosaic of the Naenae commercial centre'.³⁶ He was particularly delighted to see a new post office clock tower, noting that they were once as integral to post offices as stamps: 'Not only will the clock mark the time for all who see it, but the 47ft. high tower is undoubtedly the architectural focal point for the whole Naenae community centre'.³⁷ The customer service area featured a wooden counter, elegant pendant ceiling lights and a striking abstract mural from the emerging Stokes Valley artist Guy Ngan, who had joined the MOW in 1956 at the behest of Gordon Wilson.³⁸ Ngan went onto design sculptures and murals for several government buildings in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁹

The Naenae Post Office received public recognition at the time of its construction, appearing in professional and popular New Zealand architectural journals, and representing modern post office design in the *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (1966).⁴⁰

Later history

Due to a paucity of archival evidence, the building's post-1960s history is patchy. There are many anecdotal reports about the importance of the building in daily community life.⁴¹ A popular collective memory is how teenagers would scale the clock tower as a local rite of passage. The practice damaged the clock mechanism in 1979 and led to the tower's brick

1957, AATE 889 W3323 7 26/1/64 part 1, Wellington-Hutt District: Naenae Post Office, Archives New Zealand.

³⁵ For more in Nash's involvement in Naenae see Schrader, 1993.

³⁶ 'Notes for Prime Minister'.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Emma Ng, 'Guy Ngan, On His Own Terms', in Sian van Dyk (ed), *Guy Ngan*, Lower Hutt, Te Awakairangi: The Dowse Art Museum, 2019, p.68.

³⁹ These include the mural on the facade of Archives New Zealand building, Mugarve Street, and the sculpture on the Reserve Bank of New Zealand building, The Terrace, both in Wellington.

⁴⁰ Images of the building appeared in the following publications: 'The Government Architect and his Office', *Journal of the New Zealand Institute of Architects*, Nov 1962, p. 302; 'The Work of the Government Architect, Ministry of Works', *Home and Building*, March 1961, pp. 68-69; 'Modern Post Office at Naenae', A.H. McLintock (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, 1966, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/1966/24324/modern-post-office-at-naenae-hutt-valley> (accessed 8 May 2019).

⁴¹ Oral history research would almost certainly confirm this.

lattice work being filled in to stop would-be climbers.⁴² In 1984, substantial modifications to the building were proposed, which would have added a second storey to the structure and radically reconfigured interior spaces.⁴³ In the end changes appear to have been restricted to renovating the public service area (which likely included the removal of the original counter and lighting), replacing the fabric roof with an iron one, installing new entrance doors, plastering over lattice brick work above the western parapet, and the repainting of the interior and exterior. It might have been at this time that the Guy Ngan mural was taken down. Its location and whether it still exists is uncertain.

The original clock was removed from the tower in 1991 and apparently dumped at a local tip.⁴⁴ A new clock was installed around 2002 after publican Gary O’Keefe campaigned for its reinstatement, arguing that it was ‘greatly missed’.⁴⁵ He recalled ‘setting his watch by the Post Office clock during the 1960s in his way to and from school’ and reported that ‘hotel patrons still talk about the clock’.⁴⁶

In the late 1980s, following the creation of New Zealand Post as a state-owned enterprise, over 400 post offices were sold in a cost-cutting exercise and closures continued into the 21st century.⁴⁷ With the growth of electronic communication and the demise of letter mail, the post office ceased to be the social and commercial hub it once was. During the 2010s New Zealand Post closed many more post offices due to reducing demand for its services and to save costs.⁴⁸ These were usually sold to private buyers and buildings were converted to other uses. Remaining post office services were now franchised out. Where the post office had once been among the most conspicuous building in the high street, it was now consigned to a corner of newsagent, dairy or even petrol station.

⁴² ‘T. Kamizaj to Commissioner of Works’, 1 Nov 1979 AATE 889 W3323 7 26/1/64 part 1. Wellington-Hutt District: Naenae Post Office, Archives New Zealand.

⁴³ Other works included: installing acoustic ceiling panels, replacing the boiler, upgrading the switchboard, and replacing the floor coverings. The total cost of the renovations was \$450,000. ‘Naenae Post Office, Additions and Alterations, 1984’, ABKK W4449 Box 15. Rec No 292/84, Archives New Zealand.

⁴⁴ ‘Publican’s bid to get Naenae Ticking Again’, *The Hutt News*, 5 March 2002, p.3.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Shoebridge, 2010.

⁴⁸ Felix Desmarais, ‘NZ Post to Close 79 Standalone Post Shops as Part of Cost-Cutting Move’, Stuff, 27 November 2018, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/108893320/nz-post-to-close-79-standalone-post-shops-as-part-of-costcutting-move> (accessed 9 October 2019).

In 2015 New Zealand Post closed its Naenae branch and sold the building to private buyers.⁴⁹ Groups like the Naenae Residents' Association have lobbied for the building's retention and expressed a desire for the tower to remain standing in the face of seismic concerns. In 2018 the building was used as a temporary community art space, in part because its aesthetic qualities were well-suited for this function.⁵⁰ During the 2019 Naenae Matariki Festival the wall facing the mall was the backdrop for an outdoor screening of the movie *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, advertised as taking place 'under the clock tower'.⁵¹ The Hutt City Council announced it was in negotiations to lease the building for community purposes in late 2019.⁵² Earlier that year it was added to the District Plan heritage schedule; the proposal garnered supportive community submissions.⁵³

The tower remains an emblem of both Hillary Court and Naenae. It is often depicted in media reports on the suburb and is used in branding for local organisations and events, such as promotional group Naenae Proud – Shop Local, the 'This is Naenae: Ko Naenae Tēnei' facebook page and the 2019 Naenae Matariki Festival.⁵⁴ When the clock was repaired in 2019 social media posts elicited positive community comments, like 'the clock is and was a landmark'.⁵⁵ Its soaring form is a prominent element in the Daysh Street mural at the entrance to Naenae.⁵⁶

Associated List Entries

N/A

⁴⁹ Simon Edwards, 'Naenae Postshop and Kiwibank to Close', Stuff, 10 Feb 2015, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/65989403/Naenae-PostShop-and-KiwiBank-to-close> (accessed 9 October 2019).

⁵⁰ This evidence is drawn from lead author Ben Schrader's conversations with Naenae Residents' Association members Andy Mitchell and Emily Innes.

⁵¹ EventFinda website, <https://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2019/hunt-for-the-wilderpeople-naenae-matariki-festival/wellington-region>; Naenae Residents' Association facebook page, 28 June 2019 <https://www.facebook.com/naenaeresidents/posts/435919286963451> (accessed 11 November 2019).

⁵² Hutt at Heart website, Hutt City Council, <http://heart.huttcity.govt.nz/community/old-naenae-post-office-set-for-new-lease-of-life/> (accessed 9 October 2019).

⁵³ 'Proposed District Plan Change 52: Alignment of the District Plan with the New Zealand Heritage List. Full Set of Submissions Received', 2018 <http://iportal.huttcity.govt.nz/Record/ReadOnly?Tab=3&Uri=5132743>; 'Proposed District Plan Change 52: Alignment of the District Plan with the New Zealand Heritage List. Decision', 2019 <http://iportal.huttcity.govt.nz/Record/ReadOnly?Tab=3&Uri=5250979> (accessed 8 November 2019).

⁵⁴ Naenae Proud – Shop Local facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/naenaeproudshoplocal/>; This is Naenae: Ko Naenae Tēnei facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/KoNaenaeTenei/> and Naenae Matariki Festival facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/1101021633417990/> (accessed 8 November 2019).

⁵⁵ Hutt City Council facebook page 15 August 2019 <https://www.facebook.com/huttcitycouncil/posts/2618679941497884> (accessed 11 November 2019).

⁵⁶ 'Naenae has a Special Place in New Zealand Urbanism', Stuff, 10 Feb 2015, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/65981161/naenae-has-special-place-in-nz-urbanism> (accessed 24 Sept 2019); <https://www.resene.co.nz/competition/murals/15-08.htm> (accessed 9 October 2019).

2.2. Physical Information

Current Description

Naenae Post Office (Former) is located in Hillary Court, the commercial and community centre of the Lower Hutt suburb of Naenae. Hillary Court was built from the early 1950s and all its buildings share a common modernist architectural style and range from one to two storeys in height. An exception is a three-storey 1980s-era apartment building directly opposite the post office.



Figure 1: West-facing front elevation of the Naenae Post Office.⁵⁷

The post office building is 490 square metres and is constructed of reinforced concrete with brick infill walls, the concrete having a plaster finish. The roof has a steel frame and wooden joists and an iron roof (it was originally fabric). The north-western elevation features grid-patterned metal-framed windows that signal the customer service area and then a staff area. Clerestory windows run along the parapet. Stone aggregate is used in the bottom panel of the window grids on this elevation. The west-facing public entrance corner is splayed, which was often a feature of post office buildings, allowing for both a graceful turn of a corner site and space for an entranceway. This area contains a stone-paved vestibule and features metal and glass entrance doors (not the original). A wall to the right of the entrance door covers where the post boxes once were.

⁵⁷ All photographs by Kerryn Pollock, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, 13 November 2019.

The 14.3 metre slab-like clock tower sits to the right of the vestibule. It has two vertical concrete columns that merge in an arch at the top. The arch features decorative round holes. The clock is situated beneath this open top; under this are two bands of red brick, formerly comprising a latticework pattern. At the base of the tower is a decorative metal screen and above this is a slatted skylight.



Figures 2 and 3: south-western elevation (left) with cantilevered beams and courtyard; north-western elevation (right) with stone aggregate panelling.

On the south-western elevation is a small courtyard (originally an ornamental garden), with concrete beams that support the veranda and elegantly cantilever to the wall. This is dominated by grid-patterned, floor to ceiling metal-framed windows, behind which provided ample natural light to the mailroom. There is also an external glass door to the mail room for public parcel collection. The veranda and parapet heights carefully harmonise with the rest of Hillary Court.



Figure 4: Hillary Court mall with the Naenae Post Office tower in the background.

The rear of the building is reached by a service lane. This features a mail dock and a large band of windows that provide light to the mail room. Adjacent is the original bicycle storage annex and rear access to the staff area in the north-western elevation.

The interior comprises a mixture of (former) public and staff spaces that largely mirror the original floorplan. The public space includes a vestibule and customer service area. The staff area is dominated by the mail room, where mail was sorted for distribution. Other spaces include offices, a strong room, toilets and a bicycle storage room. Chattels have been removed along with the original counter, lighting and mural in the customer service area, but the building retains some original fixtures, such as native timber internal doors, wall-mounted heaters and metal radiators. The metal windows are opened by original crank handles and fastenings.

In November 2019 the building was being used for storage and was in need of some basic maintenance like painting, with some evidence of leaks through the metal-framed windows, but otherwise appears to be in a good material condition.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ A Hutt City Council media release stated the building will be earthquake-strengthened as part of lease arrangements referred to above; it is not however on the earthquake-prone building register. <http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/Your->

Comparative Analysis

The Naenae Post Office (Former) marks an architectural transition point when compared to other post offices designed and built during the same period. It reflects both the popularity of international modernism in the 1950s and the beginnings of a broader trend towards Brutalism in public buildings commissioned or designed by the MOW.

Gordon Wilson's (1900–59) time as the Department of Housing's Chief Architect (1936–48) and as Government Architect (1952–59) saw international modernism embedded in the approach to New Zealand public architecture, with examples such as the Dixon Street Flats in Wellington and the University of Otago Dental School (1957–61; List No. 7618). However, during his tenure variations appeared which show a continued evolution and awareness of international architectural principles. The Naenae Post Office is an example of this and foreshadows the fully-fledged Brutalist work which came to dominate public buildings during Fergus George Frederick Sheppard's time as Government Architect (1959–71).⁵⁹

Naenae Post Office has architectural affinities with Ted McCoy's Aquinas Hall in Dunedin, winner of the New Zealand Institute of Architects Gold Medal in 1956, the same year the post office was designed.



Figure 5: Aquinas Hall, 2009. Source: By Benchill - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6073821> (accessed 8 January 2020)

[Council/News-and-notice/media-releases/old-naenae-post-office-building-set-for-new-lease-of-life/](#) (accessed 19 November 2019).

⁵⁹ Rosslyn J Noonan, *By Design: A Brief History of the Public Works Department Ministry of Works, 1870–1970*, Wellington, Government Printer, 1975, p.305; Dixon Street Flats, Category 1 historic place (List No.7395); Dental School, Category 1 historic place (List No.7618); Lewis E Martin, *Built for Us: The Work of Government and Colonial Architects, 1860s to 1960s*, Dunedin, Otago University Press, 2004, pp.160, 168, 180; Robin Skinner, 'University of Otago Dental School (now known as the Walsh Building)', in Gatley, p.109.

In 2017 the majority of the distinctive brick infill of Aquinas Hall was replaced by aluminium panels as part of a seismic strengthening project.⁶⁰ Original architectural features are still extant at Naenae Post Office, most prominently the clock tower.

Post Offices

The Bauhausian-influenced Feilding and Hokitika post offices (1950 and 1953) are good examples of their type, demonstrating characteristic crisp use of concrete and glazing.⁶¹ The Gore Post Office (1958) shares the substantial street-facing stairwell and the other features of the Feilding and Hokitika buildings and projects a similar solidity, all typical of an international modernist approach. The Gore building once had a small clock attached to the blank wall of the main elevation; this had all the appearance of an afterthought and added visual clutter, despite being a useful amenity.⁶² By the nature of their design, particularly the massing of forms, these post offices appear heavy and monolithic when compared to the light and graceful lines of the Naenae building.



Figures 6 and 7: Feilding and Hokitika post offices in the 1950s. Sources: Manawatu District Libraries, 39204 and Hocken Collections, University of Otago, 17078.

⁶⁰ Naylor Love 'Aquinas College, University of Otago', <https://www.naylorlove.co.nz/project/aquinas-college-university-of-otago/> (accessed 8 January 2020).

⁶¹ Terrance Hodgson, *Looking at the Architecture of New Zealand*, Wellington, Grantham House, 1990, pp.68, 70

⁶² None of the post offices are entered onto the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero or scheduled in district plans.



Figure 8: Gore post office, 1966. Source: Archives New Zealand, AAQT 6539 W3537 66 / A80375.

The Naenae Post Office reflects the beginnings of a transition to Brutalism. Although interpreted differently around the world by individual architects, a characteristic of Brutalism is honestly expressed concrete or *béton brut* (concrete in the raw), such as off-form concrete where the textural forms of the casting process were purposely retained for effect and other castings methods were combined to create an interesting interplay of surfaces.⁶³ Other characteristics of Brutalism are textured exteriors, memorable shapes and openly-displayed structural elements.⁶⁴ While the Naenae Post Office employs plastered rather than raw or off-form concrete, it displays a textured surface through the use of stone aggregate panelling and brick infill. The slim, curved clock tower constitutes a distinctive shape, while the cantilevered concrete beams are an excellent 'expression of structure'.⁶⁵

The Masterton and Stratford post offices (1961 and 1964) share some of the early Brutalist architecture (and materials) of the Naenae building and both are larger. However, the addition of a tower at Naenae gives visual relief to the strongly horizontal form of the building and this element is missing from the other structures. The juxtaposition of vertical and horizontal axes and lines at Naenae is an arguably more sophisticated and pleasing arrangement than at Masterton and Stratford.

⁶³ Oliver Elser, 'Just what is it that makes Brutalism today so appealing? A new definition from an international perspective', in Elser, *SOS Brutalism*, Zürich, Park Books, 2017, pp.15-16; Suzanne Waters, 'Brutalism', Royal Institute of British Architects, <https://www.architecture.com/explore-architecture/brutalism> (accessed 3 January 2020); Ben Schrader, 'Public, commercial and church architecture - New directions, 1970 to 2000s', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, 2014, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/public-commercial-and-church-architecture/page-5> (accessed 3 January 2020).

⁶⁴ Royal Institute of British Architects, <https://www.architecture.com/image-library/features/brutalism-style-guide.html> (accessed 3 January 2020).

⁶⁵ Ibid.



Figures 9 and 10: Masterton (left) and Stratford post office in the 1960s. Source: Alexander Turnbull Library, DW-5054-F and DW-0815-F

State Housing Shopping Areas

Whereas the other post office buildings stand alone in their streetscapes, Naenae Post Office (Former) is an integrated part of an ensemble of other 1950s modernist buildings, a feature that enhances its aesthetic appeal and further sets it apart from its peers. It is the most prominent building in Hillary Court, the ‘focal point’ of Naenae and the country’s first pedestrian mall.⁶⁶ All the buildings in the complex had to be architecturally sympathetic to one another and while the post office is visually harmonious with the surrounding shops, the clock tower ensures the building is distinctive.

Other major state housing schemes of the general period include Savage Crescent in Palmerston North (built 1937-45), Hayes Park in Hamilton (1939-1945) and Tāmaki in Auckland (1950s).⁶⁷ Savage Crescent and Hayes Paddock were much smaller than Naenae and their modest shopping areas are not comparable with Hillary Court – only one shop was built in Savage Crescent out of a proposed 20, while the four Hayes Paddock shops were confined to one large building on a corner site.⁶⁸ Neither place had a post office. The substantial Glen Innes shopping area within the Tāmaki scheme was built from the late 1950s and remains an important community centre, but much of the original state housing area has been rebuilt, disassociating the shops from their historic context.⁶⁹ An unassuming post office was built there in 1961 and is now occupied by a Salvation Army Family Store.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Schrader, 2005, p.175.

⁶⁷ Gatley, 2008, pp.31, 33, 44.

⁶⁸ Schrader, 2012, p.17; Dorothy Pilkington, ‘Registration Report for a Historic Area: Savage Crescent State Housing Area’, New Zealand Historic Places Trust, 2012, p.52; Boffa Miskell Limited and Dave Pearson Architects Limited, ‘Hayes Paddock Design Guide’, Hamilton, Hamilton City Council, 2006, p.6; *The Houses of Hayes Paddock, Hamilton*, Hamilton, Ramp Press, 2008, p.19.

⁶⁹ ‘Glen Innes Village: Looking Back 60 Years, 1956-2016’, Auckland, Glen Innes Business Association, 2016, p.6

Construction Professionals

Gordon Wilson (Architect)

Julia Gatley, 'Wilson, Francis Gordon', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 2000, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5w36/wilson-francis-gordon> (accessed 7 January 2020)

John Robert Blake-Kelly (Architect)

John Blake-Kelly (1913-1988) was a District Architect in Wellington with the Ministry of Works from 1952. He was appointed Assistant Government Architect in 1958 and later became the country's first locally-trained graduate to hold the position of Government Architect (1971-73).⁷¹ He worked on a range of projects, including the Executive Wing (the Beehive), the Hocken Building in Dunedin, and the strengthening of the Alexander Turnbull Library, and led the planning of the Brutalist University of Canterbury Ilam (1951-1980) and University of Waikato (1963-1970s) campuses.⁷²

J. M. Construction (Builder)

Lower Hutt building firm J.M. Construction was in business from 1949 to 1989.⁷³ In addition to the Naenae Post Office (Former), the firm is known to have been associated with the Lower Hutt Central Fire Station (1955), state housing in Petone and a Department of Agriculture and Fisheries building on Matiu Somes Island.⁷⁴

Construction Materials.

Concrete, brick, steel, timber, glass, stone, plaster

<http://www.gleninnesvillage.co.nz/pdf/GI-jubilee-booklet.pdf> (accessed 6 January 2020); Schrader, 2012, p.17; Chris Barton, 'The Battle of Glen Innes', *Metro Magazine*, 30 November 2014 <https://www.metromag.co.nz/city-life/city-life-property/the-battle-of-glen-innes> (accessed 6 January 2020).

⁷⁰ Ivan Clulee, *Post Office Buildings in the Auckland Province*, Auckland, Postal History Society of New Zealand, 2011, p.9; Google Streetview, 49 Mayfair Place, Glen Innes.

⁷¹ Michael Findlay, 'Hocken Building', List No. 7809 <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7809>; Noonan, 305; 'Blake-Kelly, John Robert Patrick, 1913-1988', National Library of New Zealand, <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22367627> (accessed 7 January 2020); Ann McEwan, 'Branded by Brutalism', *Architecture New Zealand*, Sept/Oct 2005, p.66.

⁷² Ann McEwan, 'University of Waikato Campus', in Gatley, 2008, p.169; Jess Halliday, 'University of Canterbury, Ilam Campus', in Gatley, 2008, p.177.

⁷³ New Zealand Companies Office Companies Register, 'J M Construction Co Limited (6129) Removed', <https://app.companiesoffice.govt.nz/companies/app/ui/pages/companies/6129?> (accessed 7 January 2020).

⁷⁴ Lower Hutt Central Fire Station (Former), List No. 9319, <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/9319> (accessed 7 January 2020); *New Zealand Gazette*, 5 February 1970, p.163; *New Zealand Gazette*, 22 May 1975, p.1163.

Key Physical Dates

1959	Construction of building
1979	Brick lattice-work of clock tower infilled
1984-85	Renovations to the building: public service area renovated; fabric roof replaced with an iron one; new entrance doors installed; lattice brickwork above the western parapet plastered over; interior and exterior repainted
1991	Original clock removed
<i>Circa 2002</i>	New clock installed

Uses

Communication	Post Office (Former)
Trade	Warehouse/storage area

2.3. Chattels

There are no chattels included in this List entry.

2.4. Sources

Sources Available and Accessed

There is no substantive architectural history of post office buildings in New Zealand. Some buildings are mentioned in architectural histories such as Julia Gatley's *Long Live the Modern*, but these are relatively few in number. This report has therefore drawn mainly on primary sources in Archives New Zealand, including architectural plans, policy statements, official memorandums and speech notes. Social and traditional news media were important source of information on current community perceptions of the building.

Further Reading

Ferguson, Gael, *Building the New Zealand Dream*, Wellington, The Dunmore Press Limited with the assistance of the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs.

Gatley, Julia (ed), *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture 1904-1984*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2008.

Millar, David, *Once Upon a Village: A History of the Hutt Valley*, Wellington, New Zealand University Press for the Lower Hutt City Corporation, 1972.

Schrader, Ben, *We Call it Home: A History of State Housing in New Zealand*, Auckland, Reed, 2005.

3. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

3.1. Section 66 (1) Assessment

This place has been assessed for, and found to possess aesthetic, architectural, historical, social and technological significance or value. It is considered that this place qualifies as part of New Zealand's historic and cultural heritage.

Aesthetic Significance or Value

Naenae Post Office (Former) has significant aesthetic value for the visual contribution it makes as an individual building and within its surroundings. This is immediately evident by the juxtaposition between the strongly horizontal mass of the building and the soaring verticality of the slender, graceful tower. It is reinforced by the play of light and shadow created by forms like the cantilevered beams, the tower screen, slatted skylight, and fenestrations. The painted plastered frame and brick infill walls make for a pleasing contrast of materials and textures, a point reinforced by the use of stone aggregate panelling within the smooth metal window frames.

The aesthetic attributes of Naenae Post Office (Former) are recognised by the Naenae community, who have long valued the building's landmark status, particularly the tower as an important vertical marker of the suburb's commercial hub. It remains an emblem of both Hillary Court and Naenae and its visual qualities have lent themselves to use in branding material and other visual representations of the suburb.

Architectural Significance or Value

The building has major architectural significance. The initial tower concept was the work of architect Ernst Pliske, whose international modernist approach was highly influential. The building is an example of the transition to the Brutalist style of architectural modernism in New Zealand, which was pioneered locally by architects like Gordon Wilson and Ted McCoy and came to dominate public building architecture. In line with this general architectural evolution, Naenae Post Office (Former) demonstrates a stylistic shift in post office design from Bauhausian-influenced international modernism (as evolved in post-war New Zealand) to Brutalism. Post offices thereafter were generally built in this style, which continued to evolve through to the 1970s. A formative early Brutalist building was McCoy's Aquinas Hall (significantly altered in 2017) and the Naenae Post Office (Former) clearly references this building's architectural principles and materials.

Naenae Post Office (Former) is one of the most important and architecturally accomplished mid-twentieth century suburban or small town post offices in New Zealand. Other post offices were built in this style – notably at Stratford – but none sported clock towers. It is this traditional feature that places the Naenae building above its post office peers. Its importance is enhanced in being part of ensemble of modernist buildings that comprise the wider landscape of Hillary Court. The exterior of the building has changed little since its opening and internal changes were largely confined to modernising fixtures and chattels.

Historical Significance or Value

The building has considerable historical significance. It was constructed at a time when the Post and Telegraph Department was experiencing rapid growth and was central to the functioning of the New Zealand economy. The department impacted directly on the daily life of New Zealand businesses and citizens and its importance was reflected in the prominence of its post office buildings along streetscapes. The landmark status of the Naenae Post Office (Former) exemplifies this point. Conversely, its 2015 closure also expresses the rapid twenty-first century demise of the post office in national life.

Other post offices built in the 1950s could convey the trajectory of the post office in New Zealand life, but Naenae Post Office (Former) stands out both for its superior architecture and its place in the development of New Zealand's most innovative state housing suburb. Naenae is highly significant in the history of state housing in New Zealand and the post office is a leading element in the purpose-built commercial centre that served the suburb.

The building is unusual in having a clock tower and references an earlier time when post office clock towers were common. Their construction was discontinued due to their perceived seismic hazard following the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake, but was revived in Naenae's case following successful advocacy by the MOW. Its tower was built so as to minimise risk and its presence demonstrated the influence of government architects within the public service.

Social Significance or Value

Naenae Post Office (Former) has social significance as a landmark building in Naenae. Local residents campaigned for the reinstatement of the clock in the early 2000s and participated in the heritage scheduling of the building in the Hutt City district plan in 2019. It has been the site of community events and its distinctive form is included in branding for local groups.

Technological Significance or Value

The Naenae Post Office (Former) represents the application of technology and design to the aesthetic problem presented by the departmental prohibition on clock towers, made acute in a place dominated by low-rise, uniform buildings. The use of reinforced concrete and a layout which separated the tower from the rest of the building reduced the seismic risk. While Naenae Post Office (Former) did not set a precedent, it nevertheless has technological significance as the first post office tower built after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake.

3.2. Section 66 (3) Assessment

It is considered that this place qualifies as a Category 1 historic place. It was assessed against, and found to qualify under the following criteria: a, b, g and k.

(a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history

The place has outstanding significance in representing the substantial growth of the post office system in the mid-twentieth century and the importance of the institution in daily New Zealand life at a local or suburban level. This is reflected in the excellent standard of design, building materials, and public amenity in the building, which largely retains its original form, layout and design. Its closure marks the institution's decline due to rapid technological change. There are other buildings that can reflect the rise and fall of the post office in New Zealand communities, but this building's association with Naenae's development as a major state mid-twentieth century housing suburb provides an extra dimension that comparable buildings cannot.

(b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history

The place has an outstanding association with New Zealand's two leading mid-twentieth century modernist architects: Ernst Plischke and Gordon Wilson. Plischke planned and designed Naenae and it was his idea to include a tower in its commercial centre. As the Government Architect, Wilson had oversight of the Naenae Post Office design. By the mid-1950s he had embraced Brutalism and it is very likely that it was his decision to use elements of this for the Naenae building. The post office is also strongly associated with Walter Nash, the local Member of Parliament and Labour Prime Minister (1957-60). He was a driving force in Naenae's post-1945 development and spoke at the building's opening.

Finally, the place is directly connected with mid-twentieth century state housing schemes and the provision of purpose-built community centres. Naenae is the best realised expression of the garden city idea in New Zealand and the post office is a highly-significant part of the community centre at its heart. As the most prominent and architecturally noteworthy element within the carefully-arranged Hillary Court, it represents the presence of planned civic buildings and spaces in state housing schemes.

(e) The community association with, or public esteem for the place

The place's soaring tower is a valued feature of the local landscape, not only for its utilitarian value as a clock, but as a distinctive landmark. The public esteem for the place is demonstrated by community involvement in and support for the reinstatement and refurbishment of the clock, and public expressions of concern for the building's future. Use of the clock tower in community branding highlights the important role this building plays in the communal identity of Naenae.

(g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place

The place demonstrates outstanding excellence in design in a small public building. Its design strength lies in the dramatic contrast between the strong horizontal planes of the building itself and soaring verticality of the slender tower, features which set it apart from other post office buildings of the era. It is a poetic combination that is enhanced by the use of cantilevered veranda beams, a geometric metal screen, and carefully placed fenestrations. It is a building that both surprises and satisfies the senses. The tower also demonstrates technical accomplishment in being the first post office clock tower to be built following the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake, achieved by a synthesis of technological and design responses. It was not until the 1970s that further post office towers were built. The building was acclaimed at the time of its opening as representing modern post office design.

(k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

The place forms part of an ensemble of largely original modernist buildings that comprise Hillary Court, New Zealand's first comprehensively planned commercial centre and pedestrian mall. The post office is the landmark structure within this complex, which includes the modernist Naenae Community Centre and Naenae Olympic Pool, both of which were designed as recreational and associational centres for the burgeoning population of Naenae in the early 1950s. Furthermore, it is an important element in the state housing suburb of Naenae, a place of major importance in the history of government and housing in New

Zealand. While other major state housing schemes had purpose-built shops or shopping centres, the scale of Hillary Court and the intactness of the mall and the surrounding state housing area elevate its importance.

Summary of Significance or Values

Naenae Post Office (Former) has outstanding significance as the keystone building in Hillary Court, New Zealand's first comprehensively planned commercial centre and pedestrian mall, and for its location within a historically significant state housing suburb. It represents the importance of the post office in the daily life of twentieth-century New Zealanders and is closely associated with three exceptional individuals in the fields of architecture and politics. The place demonstrates design excellence as an architecturally and aesthetically accomplished post office building that represents the early stages of a transition from Bauhaus-influenced international modernist principles to Brutalism, a style that became fully-fledged the following decade, and its landmark qualities are readily appreciated by the local community.

4. APPENDICES

4.1. Appendix 1: Visual Identification Aids

Location Maps





Naenae Post Office (Former) located in Hillary Court in the Naenae civic centre. The building is indicated by the red rectangle while Naenae Railway Station is indicated by the red arrow.



Source: GoogleEarth with Quickmap overlay.

Map of Extent



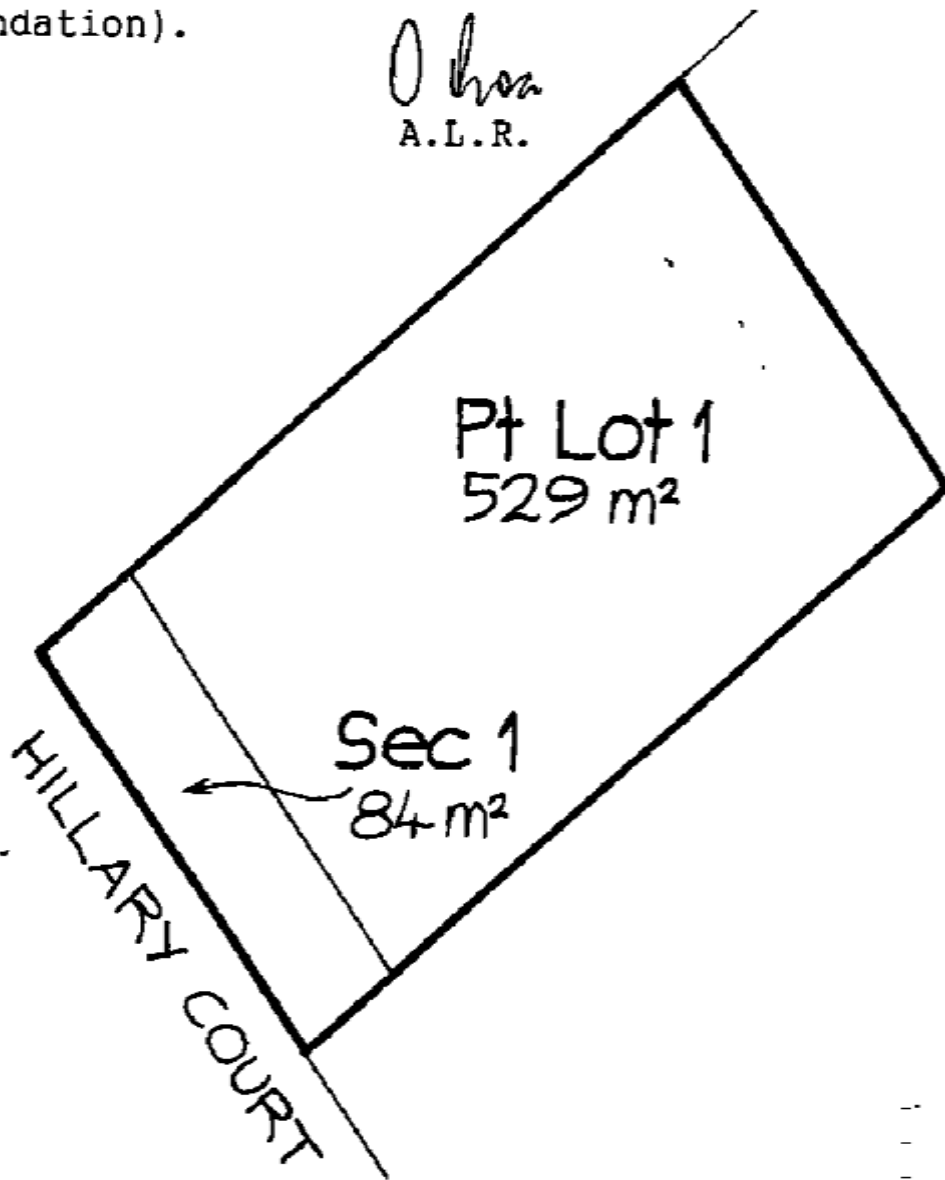
Extent includes the land described as Sec 1 SO 24113 and Pt Lot 1 DP 15073 (RT WN33C/287) and part of the land described as Legal Road, Wellington Land District, and the building known as Naenae Post Office (Former) thereon, including the verandas. Source: GoogleEarth with Quickmap overlay.

Current Identifier

	RECORD OF TITLE UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT 2017 FREEHOLD Search Copy	 S. W. Muir Registrar-General of Land
Identifier	WN33C/287	
Land Registration District	Wellington	
Date Issued	13 January 1989	
Prior References	PROC 425318 PROC 5432	
Estate	Fee Simple	
Area	613 square metres more or less	
Legal Description	Part Lot 1 Deposited Plan 15073 and Section 1 Survey Office Plan 24113	
Registered Owners	Seki Investments Limited	
Interests	Subject to Section 27B State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986 (which provides for the resumption of land on the recommendation of the Waitangi Tribunal and which does not provide for third parties, such as the owner of the land, to be heard in relation to the making of any such recommendation) Subject to Section 3 Petroleum Act 1937 Subject to Section 8 Atomic Energy Act 1945 Subject to Section 3 Geothermal Energy Act 1953 Subject to Section 6 and 8 Mining Act 1971 Subject to Section 5 and 261 Coal Mines Act 1979 10639712.3 Mortgage to ASB Bank Limited - 2.12.2016 at 11:06 am	
<small>Transaction Id</small>	<small>57217056</small>	<small>Search Copy Dated 15/05/19 2:30 pm, Page 1 of 1</small>
<small>Client Reference</small>	<small>hwagata001</small>	<small>Register Only</small>

mentation).

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A.L.R.



4.2. Appendix 2: Visual Aids to Historical Information

Historical Plans

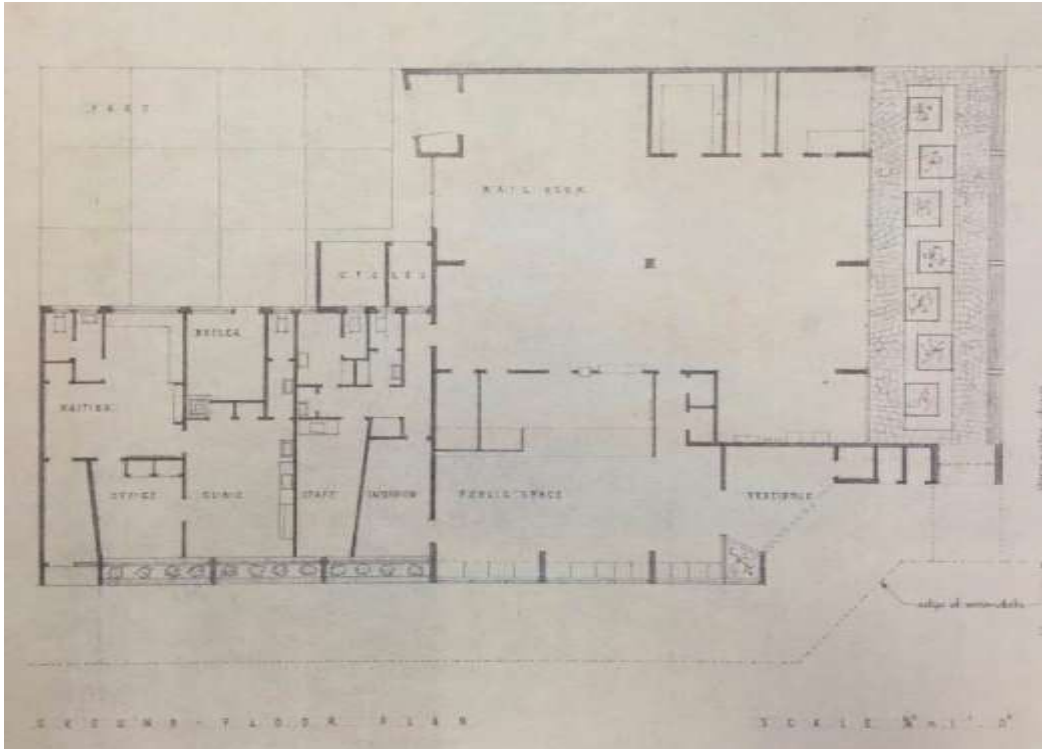


Figure 11: Floorplan of the Naenae Post Office, circa 1958. Source: Archives New Zealand, AADU 578 Box 4 34

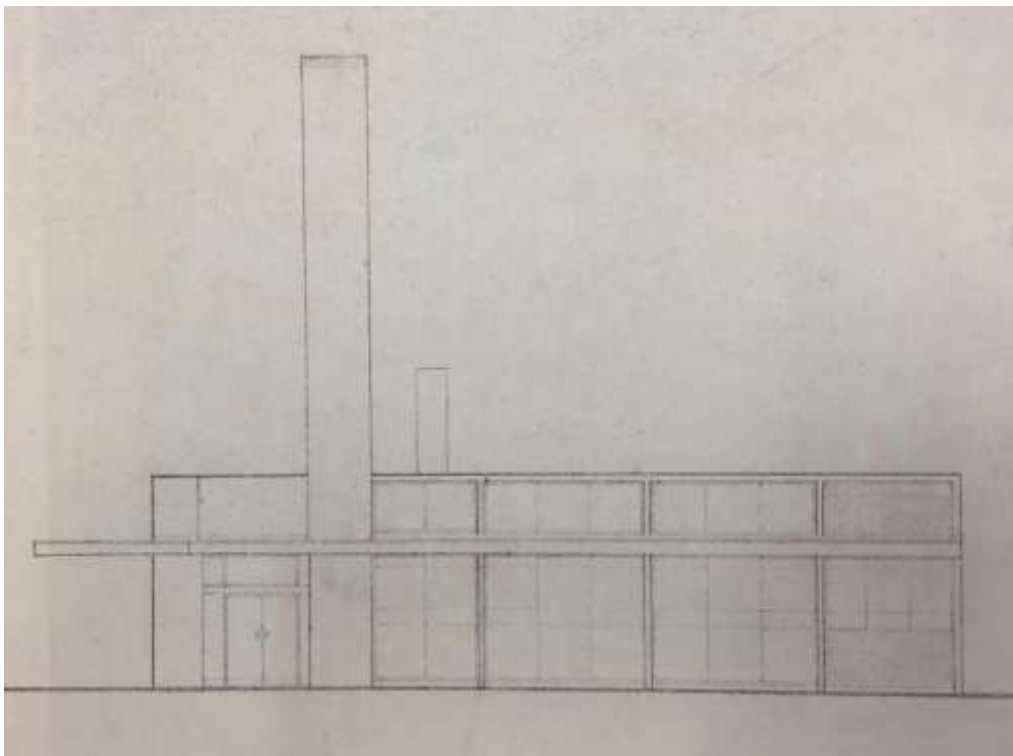


Figure 12: South-eastern elevation of the post office, circa 1958. Source: Archives New Zealand, AADU 578 Box 4 34

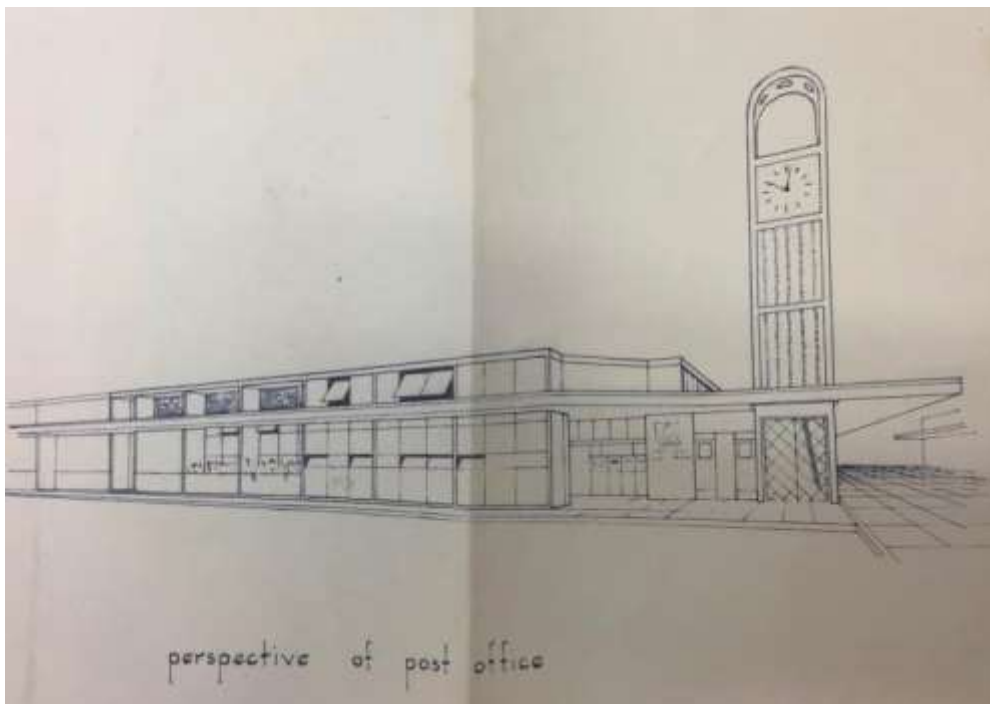


Figure 13: Norther-western perspective of the post office, circa 1958. Source: Archives New Zealand, AATE W3323 889 Box 7

Historical Photographs



Figure 14: The Naenae Post Office shortly before its opening in December 1959. The clock was still to be installed. Source: Alexander Turnbull Library, EP/1959/4123-F



Figure 15: Workers complete finishing the vestibule in 1959. Note the Guy Ngan mural on the back wall. Source: Archives New Zealand, AAMF W3327 909 Box 142



Figure 16: Naenae Post Office in early 1960. Source: Archives New Zealand, AAME W5603 8106 Box 97



Figure 17: Exterior courtyard showing ornamental garden, veranda, screen and cantilevered beams, *circa* 1960. Source: Alexander Turnbull Library, EP/1959/4122-F

4.3. Current Photographs of Place⁷⁵



Figure 18: Naenae Post Office (Former) and Hillary Court mall.

⁷⁵ All photographs by Kerryn Pollock, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, 13 November 2019.



Figure 19: south-western elevation. This side of the building was the mailroom. The door in the centre opens onto the parcel collection area.



Figure 20: the rear of the building showing the mail dock (indicated by the roller door) and bicycle storage room (small lean-to with the large gate behind the stacked pallets).

4.4. Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information

Part 4 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Chattels or object or class of chattels or objects (Section 65(6))

Under Section 65(6) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, an entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero relating to a historic place may include any chattel or object or class of chattels or objects –

- a) Situated in or on that place; and
- b) Considered by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to contribute to the significance of that place; and
- c) Proposed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero.

Significance or value (Section 66(1))

Under Section 66(1) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may enter any historic place or historic area on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero if the place possesses aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

Category of historic place (Section 66(3))

Under Section 66(3) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may assign Category 1 status or Category 2 status to any historic place, having regard to any of the following criteria:

- a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history
- b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history
- c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history
- d) The importance of the place to tangata whenua
- e) The community association with, or public esteem for, the place
- f) The potential of the place for public education
- g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place
- h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place

- i) The importance of identifying historic places known to date from an early period of New Zealand settlement
- j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places
- k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for the purpose of assigning Category 1 or Category 2 status to a historic place, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3).

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for entering historic places or historic areas of interest to Māori, wāhi tūpuna, wāhi tapu, or wāhi tapu areas on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3) or (5) or in regulations made under subsection (4).

NOTE: Category 1 historic places are 'places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value.' Category 2 historic places are 'places of historical or cultural heritage significance or value.'