

## Historic Heritage Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Historic Heritage?

Historic heritage refers to the places, buildings and structures that people value for their historical, physical, and cultural significance.

The Resource Management Act (RMA) defines historic heritage as:

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

- archaeological
- architectural
- cultural
- historic
- scientific
- technological, and

Includes:

- historic sites, structures, places, and areas
- archaeological sites
- sites of significance or sacred to Māori, including wāhi tapu
- surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources

Therefore, heritage places can be many kinds of buildings, public and private, commercial, industrial, or residential, or even places where no physical structures may be visible.

Heritage places are associated with Lower Hutt's history and are places that provide a connection, understanding or appreciation of the history and culture in Lower Hutt.

### Why is historic heritage important?

As our city grows and changes, taking steps to protect heritage places and buildings becomes very important. Historical heritage is a key contributor to our city's vibrancy and sense of place, particularly when it is retained, celebrated and maintained.

### How does the current District Plan protect heritage?

Councils across the country have policies and rules in their district plans that help protect heritage buildings and sites from inappropriate development. Lower Hutt's current District Plan places restrictions on demolition of historic heritage buildings and requires resource consent for some modifications. However, minor alterations, repairs, and redecoration are permitted.

### **Why is council doing this work?**

All councils are required by the Resource Management Act to review the contents of their District Plan at least every 10 years. In undertaking this review, we are required by Central Government and Greater Wellington Regional Council policies to identify and protect historic heritage.

The Resource Management Act lists “the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development” as a matter of national importance.

The Greater Wellington Regional Policy Statement requires us to identify places, sites and areas with significant historic heritage values and to protect these from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

There are indications that there are a number of sites and buildings in Lower Hutt with notable historic heritage values that have not been listed in the current District Plan. This limited listing of historic heritage may have resulted in the loss of historic buildings, such as the 1883 Oddfellows Hall in Petone, which was demolished in 2017.

At the same time, increasing development pressure and government requirements to enable more intensive housing create the risk of losing more historic heritage if it is not protected.

### **What will this mean for my property if it is identified as historic heritage in the District Plan?**

If your property is being considered for inclusion, Council would have already contacted you in September 2021.

Engagement with property owners and the wider community regarding what the new plan should include is important to ensure it is fit for purpose.

As part of this public engagement and review of the plan, it may be decided that consent should be sought for certain activities that result in major changes to a property identified as having historic heritage. This could mean you may require consent to undertake activities like demolition, external modifications, additions, alterations, and relocation. In recognition of the additional costs that may be incurred by owners of historic heritage, Council has a \$1.5 million fund over 10 years to help owners meet the costs of conserving these taonga. See further below for details. You are unlikely to require resource consent to carry out all the usual repairs and maintenance that you would on any other property, such as repairs using the same materials, general maintenance, painting your house and interior modifications or alterations such as a new bathroom or kitchen or removing internal walls.

No final decisions on these measures are to be made until we have had this wider engagement. We encourage you to get involved to let us know how we should protect heritage in Lower Hutt.

### **Does this mean anything for my property right now?**

Unless your property is already listed in the current District Plan, there are no immediate changes to your property. We will discuss with property owners and wider community about how we protect heritage before any new listings are finalised in the updated District Plan and we encourage you to be part of this.

Council is also currently processing a plan change as required by the government to enable denser and higher housing across our City. Through this plan change it may be decided that restricting building heights in heritage areas is necessary to retain the unique history and culture of Lower Hutt. Engagement on this has now closed, but information on how this is progressing will be updated [here](#).

### **What support can heritage property owners expect?**

We have a \$1.5 million fund over the next 10 years to support owners of heritage sites and buildings to maintain these treasures.

The fund can be used for:

- specialist advice including heritage, conservation, architectural, and structural
- conservation plans
- building and resource consent fees
- emergency building work
- seismic strengthening work
- conservation and restoration building work

More information about the Built Heritage Incentive Fund can be found on our website or contact us at [heritage.fund@huttcity.govt.nz](mailto:heritage.fund@huttcity.govt.nz) (<http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/Services/Funding/Built-heritage-incentive-fund/>)

### **How were potential historic heritage buildings, sites, structures, places, and areas chosen? What criteria were used to identify historic heritage?**

The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) for the Wellington Region sets out criteria for identifying historic heritage. According to Policy 21 of the RPS, district plans must identify places, sites, and areas with significant historic heritage values under one or more of the following criteria:

- **Historic Values:** these relate to the history of a place and how it demonstrates important historical themes, events, people, or experiences
- **Physical Values:** these values relate to the physical evidence present
- **Social Values:** these values relate to the meanings that a place has for a particular community or communities

- Tangata Whenua Values: the place is sacred or important to Māori for spiritual, cultural or historical reasons
- Surroundings: the setting or context of the place contributes to an appreciation and understanding of its character, history and/or development
- Rarity: the place is unique or rare within the district or region
- Representativeness: the place is a good example of its type or era.

A team of heritage specialists from WSP New Zealand was commissioned to carry out an assessment to identify historic heritage values in Lower Hutt, based on the criteria set out in Policy 21 of the RPS, as listed above. These specialists have undertaken initial research for this assessment and the initial research has now been verified through fieldwork and site visits.

### **How have tangata whenua values been assessed?**

Tangata whenua values (those relating to the active protection of resources of importance to Māori) are an important component of the historic heritage of Lower Hutt. The initial research carried out by WSP New Zealand has not included a full assessment of these values due to a lack of the specific expertise required for this. A separate assessment of these will be carried out by mana whenua (Māori with ancestral/territorial rights and responsibilities over a particular place) in the near future.

### **What is the difference between an individual listing and a historic heritage area?**

An individual listing refers to single building or item that may hold significant historic heritage values. A historic heritage area is a group of buildings or items that collectively, or when considered together, may hold significant historic heritage values.

In some cases, a property may be included in a historic heritage area and also be identified as having significant heritage values on its own. Some properties may be located in an area but have no significance as an individual building or item. This mean restrictions around demolition, external modifications, additions, alterations, and relocation may not apply.

Both heritage areas and individual buildings or items are assessed using the Regional Policy Statement Policy 21 criteria referred to above.

### **Will a heritage listing affect my property value?**

Values are affected by a variety of factors so we can't comment on whether a heritage listing will have a positive, negative or neutral effect on a property's value.

### **What are the next steps?**

We encourage you to contact us with any questions, and to discuss the potential historic heritage values identified on your property.

In due course we will also be releasing a new draft District Plan. This is the blueprint for making sure our city functions well and protects the things that make it special. We will be engaging with communities and seeking feedback on how the draft plan can be improved.

Measures to protect areas and buildings of historic heritage will be part of that, just as they are in the current District Plan. We will be engaging with the public on what those measures should be, and we encourage you to have your say in this process.