MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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Important notice

Fever Hospital Tour

Sunday, April 14 at 2.00 pm

The SPCA have kindly offered us a tour of the old Fever Hospital in the Town Belt above Mt Vic before the next phase of renovations get under way to make this an operational facility. This will be a unique chance to see the building with many of its features as a former hospital still in place and to hear something of its history.

Meet at the Fever Hospital off Alexandra Road

We would like to offer a donation to the SPCA as a thank you for the time staff are taking to show us around the building, so will be passing around an envelope for a collection.

(Non-members very welcome, but we suggest a $5 donation to the SPCA.)

More events

May 18, Saturday We are in the process of organising a visit to the Alexander Turnbull Library. This will provide an introduction to the services of the Library and how to use its rich resources to research Wellington history. More information will be sent once we are able to finalise details with the Library. If you do not receive your newsletter via email and would like to join this visit, please let Judy Southworth know on 385 6090.

July 21, Sunday Bee Dawson, author of *A History of Gardening in New Zealand*, will talk to us about . . . the history of gardening in New Zealand. (This event will be at Crossways.)

Harcourts Building

Earlier this year, a proposal to demolish this NZHPT category 1 building on Lambton Quay was declined. The owner has appealed the Commissioners' decision and is taking the case for demolition to the Environment Court. The outcome of this will be important for those concerned about heritage, particularly given our current environment of earthquake-strengthening requirements, changes to the Resource Management Act and introduction of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Bill (which makes major changes to the regime governing the New Zealand Historic Places Trust). NZHPT and the new Historic Places Wellington, along with others, will be opposing demolition in the Environment Court.

Historical Note

April 18 was endorsed as *The International Day for Monuments and Sites* by UNESCO in 1983. The theme for 2013 is the **Heritage of Education**. Throughout history and in different geo-cultural contexts, education has been practised in a wide range of places or buildings. Many of those buildings or sites are recognised as bearing not only social or institutional values but also historic or artistic ones, and have therefore become a significant part of our cultural heritage. The protection and conservation of the heritage of education not only implies preserving cultural assets but also celebrating education as one of the fundamental human tasks. To mark *International Day for Monuments and Sites*, we have chosen to feature the two colleges in our vicinity in this Historical Note.

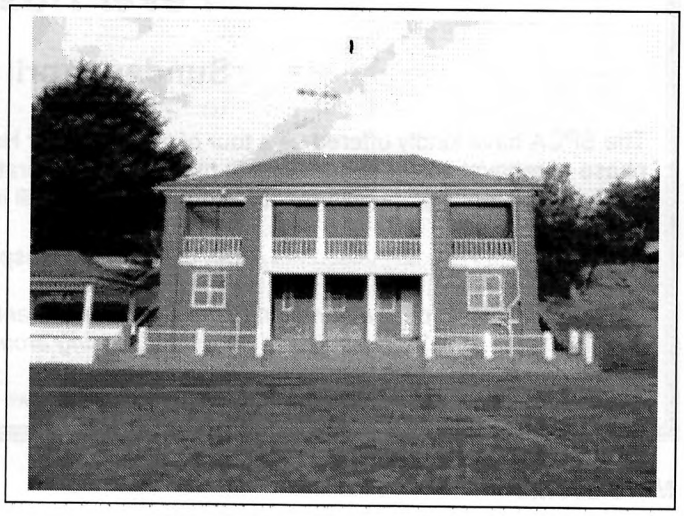
What many people may not know is that Wellington East Girls' College was originally called Mount Victoria Girls' College. It opened for the 1925 school year and as late as February, when advertisements were placed inviting parents of intending girls to be interviewed by the principal, it was still named so. At the end of 1924, however, protests had begun over the similarity of the name and potential for confusion with Victoria University College. By May, the school's name had changed to Wellington East Girls' College.

Celebrating education in Mt Victoria: the work of Charles Lawrence

Historic buildings in the grounds of Wellington College and Wellington East Girls' College were designed by the architect Charles Alexander Lawrence. Lawrence was born in 1873 and educated in Aberdeen, Scotland. He immigrated to New Zealand in about 1895 and worked for the Scottish architect Thomas Turnbull in Wellington for a number of years. Lawrence joined the architectural branch of the Public Works Department and worked with John Campbell, Government Architect, before joining the firm of Penty & Blake. When Blake dissolved the partnership in 1909, the firm continued as Penty & Lawrence until Penty's death in 1919. At that time, A. B. Hamilton had been taken into partnership but shortly after, in 1920, the practice was merged with that of Swan & Swan, the practice becoming Swan, Lawrence & Swan. Charles Lawrence died in 1933 aged 61.

Penty & Blake had been architects to the Wellington College Board of Governors in the early twentieth century and Lawrence became the Board architect in the 1920s, with a number of commissions. Surviving examples are the Cricket Pavilion and Firth House (former kitchen block & dining hall) - NZHPT Category 2 historic place (Register no. 4957). The foundation stones for the Pavilion and Firth House were laid on 25 June 1923 by his Excellency the governor-general Lord Jellico and the two buildings, along with others, were opened on 1 December, 1924. Constructed of brick, both are of a symmetrical composition with Georgian Revival styling. They provide an important historic and architectural link to the past as the college has developed over time.

Firth House, Wellington College



The Pavilion, Wellington College

One of most important examples of Lawrence's work is the Wellington East Girls' College Main Building, located on the corner of Austin and Paterson Streets – NZHPT Category 1 historic place (Register no. 1445). Designed in 1923 when he was in partnership with Swan and Swan, the foundation stone was laid by Lord Jellico on 30 September 1924. The building was completed and opened in April 1925. It is representative of neo-classical styling and includes a number of outstanding architectural features including the vestibule and grand staircase with ionic columns and black and white titled flooring. The main building contributes to the sense of history and pride for the school and its retention and earthquake strengthening means that the building will continue to contribute to the schooling life of young women in Wellington. A beautiful example of public educational buildings designed in the 1920s, it is an important architectural landmark in the

View over Wellington East Girls College and Wellington College, 1931.
EP-Education-Secondary Schools-Wellington College-12.
The Dominion Post Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library

By Natasha Naus