

Mt Victoria Historical Society Inc

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The past financial year, like the previous one, was rather consumed with city planning matters. We have, however, still worked hard to deliver what we hope are interesting offerings to members.

Newsletters

In the year July 1 2021 to June 30 2022, we achieved our target of four newsletters. In addition to information about other activities and events, they included stories on the long history of the grocery store on the corner of Brougham and Majoribanks Street; Why Old Places Matter, an article by Dr Ben Schrader based on his talk; the Brougham Hill Tennis Club and an article on Edge Hill. The latter was also a milestone, in that it was our one-hundredth newsletter as a Society. It was also great to have another member contributing to the newsletter to share research and related activities.

Outcome:

New research was conducted into the history of Mt Victoria to expand our knowledge base, and shared with members through the newsletters and members were kept informed of news and events.

Events

This year we had two speaker events: our AGM was followed by Dr Ben Schrader talking about The Value of Heritage and Alan Olliver gave a talk about historic Home and Hania Streets. For Wellington Heritage Week, Joanna led two guided tours of Working Class Early Mount Victoria, then ran it again for Walk Wellington guides in February. On a beautiful Sunday afternoon at the very end of May, Alan gave a guided tour highlighting buildings in southern Mt Victoria which could be lost due to the loss of 'character' protection under the new District Plan rules. (As we entered what we now know was our wettest winter on record, the second one planned of northern Mt Victoria by Joanna was postponed indefinitely.)

Outcome:

Again, our walking tours proved very popular and we shared the visible history of the suburb with wider Wellington through Heritage Week and Walk Wellington guides. Our research, and that of other experts, was shared with members through talks and walks.

Heritage advocacy

The all-consuming activity on the advocacy front centred around the Draft District Plan and then the Proposed District Plan. We made an in-depth submission on the Draft District Plan in December 2021. We also worked with a wider group in Mt Victoria to prepare a submission guide to assist others in making submissions.

We would like to thank all our members who have engaged with the Wellington City Council planning process at various stages, because we know that it takes a considerable amount of time and can be frustrating. The process involved in making the Proposed District Plan Operative is a little more 'legalistic', but that will be a story for next year's annual report.

Outcome:

We prepared two significant submissions, guidelines for submitters and many communications to keep interested residents informed. The Draft District Plan was disappointing after all the effort we, and others, put into submissions on the Spatial Plan and, despite our best efforts, the resulting Proposed District Plan published in July contained no material changes for Mt Victoria.

Other activities

Again, unfortunately, we have to report that due to resourcing constraints, we made no progress on our heritage plaque project but we do hope to revive it in the not-too-distant future.

Towards the end of June, we allowed ourselves to get excited when we finally heard that Wellington City Council was ready to install the heritage plaque about the World War II radar station on the top of Mt Victoria, which we have worked on with them for two years. Regrettably, has not happened yet - I like to think that 'wettest winter on record' is again to blame - but we will keep on the case.

In June, we put a notice in the Mt Vic Newsletter to see if we could find a volunteer to help us with our website. We are keen to get more of the information we have online and shared with a wider audience, starting with the stories collected as part of our 2006 Oral History Project. The great news is that we had two volunteers come forward and, as a result of working with one of them, soon all the oral history stories we are able to publish at this stage will be accessible on our website.

Following the general approval of members at the last AGM, we began a review of our 'brand', with the key aim of updating the imagery around it. In May, we held a very successful workshop with the committee and a small number of member volunteers, whom we would particularly like to thank for giving up their time. We have not yet got to the point of presenting a brief to a design company to turn the ideas into a 'look' (again, resource constraints), but are keen to push this forward in 2022-23.

Outcome:

We are not losing sight of what we think are important projects, despite the time devoted to city planning issues, and some major projects are well under way.

Membership

Membership numbers at June 30, 2022 stood at 73, a slight increase on the previous year.

Outcome:

The raised awareness of the Society that comes through guided walks and even engagement over planning issues, has kept membership numbers up.

Conclusion

Once again, I'd like to thank the committee for the past year: Jane O'Loughlin, Alan Olliver, and Rosemary Bromley for their hard work on so many different fronts. We've achieved all that we have despite having had a very small committee of only four, which has meant we've sometimes not managed a quorum for our meetings. As always, we are very happy for members to assist with projects, without joining the committee, so please don't hesitate to let us know if you'd like to get involved e.g. heritage plaques.

Finally, thank you, members, for your support over the past year.

Joanna M.A. Newman
Convenor

September 2022