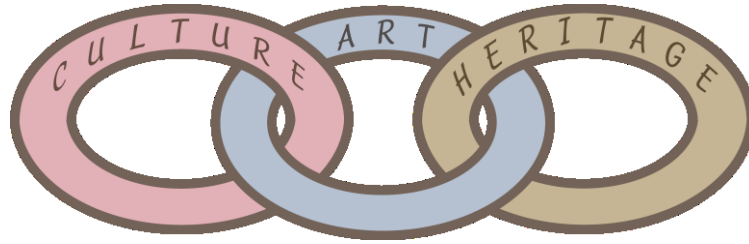


A NEGLECTED HERITAGE?



SUBMISSION TO MDC LONG TERM PLAN 2021-2031

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Founding Trustee, Marlborough Heritage Trust
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ARTS, CULTURE and HERITAGE

Pages 14 to 16 of the draft Long Term Plan cover “Investing in the Community”. Paragraph Three provides more detail of the desired community outcomes in *“sport and recreation, cultural, heritage, and more.”*

Unfortunately this is the only time heritage is mentioned in the entire Long Term Plan. Although “heritage” is consistently included in any “Arts, Culture and Heritage” category in Council plans, the reality is that funding for heritage activities is just as consistently a very minor part of any expenditure in this category.

Even more disappointing however, is the absence of any forecast **Capital Expenditure** on heritage projects in the next ten years, the years covered by the LTP.

I arrived in Marlborough in 1990, coincidentally the year the Marlborough Historical Society opened the Marlborough Provincial Museum at Brayshaw Park. Ten years later Council agreed to provide a modest sum (initially \$50,000 per year) to support the Museum operation. This has grown to the present figure of around \$200,000 annually.

Over the same thirty years the only significant capital expenditure on any new heritage project in Marlborough has been a small extension to the Renwick Library Museum.

In the meantime the Marlborough Museum remains exactly the same size as it was in 1990. It is filled to over-capacity with just two permanent exhibitions, a lecture theatre, archives storage, research room and artefact storage. Any new exhibition is confined to the space of a home lounge and many artefacts remain in temporary Beavertown storage.

The rich and unique history of Marlborough deserves much more than that.

THE MARLBOROUGH HERITAGE TRUST

The Heritage Trust was established in 2016. It was established to provide appropriate governance and funding for heritage in partnership with Council.

Despite the fine intentions and dedicated membership, the Trust is clearly under resourced. It has operated at a significant loss each year, and is constantly faced with unexpected operating costs as its buildings age and compliance requirements increase.

HERITAGE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

However in my view the most unfortunate omission in the Long Term Plan is the lack of any provision whatsoever for capital expenditure on a heritage project. Is there no vision of an expanded and modern interactive museum at Brayshaw Park? Will the idea of a National Whaling Museum just fade away? Will the unique farming, wine and aviation stories of Marlborough never be told in imaginative and visitor friendly attractions? If there is not any vision - or provision - in the long term plan, then these things are bound to never happen.

A COMPARISON

We can only look enviously to the west. Tasman Bays Heritage Trust gets an operating grant of 2 million dollars annually from its dual council partners. And among other things they have allocated 3 million dollars in their LTP to build a new Archives Research and Collections facility to support their Nelson Museum. They are bigger than Marlborough – but not ten times bigger. Except perhaps in their vision and commitment to heritage.

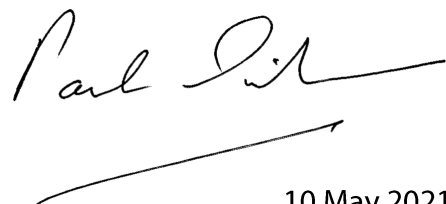
IN SUMMARY

Heritage in Marlborough has been neglected for too long. Our heritage needs a champion – or a team of champions – to help us catch up. I know there are members of our present Council who do have an interest – and a passion – for Marlborough's history. Perhaps it is time to do some serious collective thinking – and get some serious plans for the future.

DECISION SOUGHT FROM COUNCIL

I urge Council to –

- 1) Include in the Long Term Plan a provision for Capital Expenditure on heritage projects over the next ten years, with a suggested figure of 2 million dollars in each of the next three-yearly intervals;
- 2) Strengthen the Marlborough Heritage Trust by a 50% increase in its operating budget and ensuring strong representation from Council and Iwi trustees;
- 3) Support the formation of an appropriate working group and budgets for heritage consultants to develop strategic visions and economic feasibility studies for future capital projects in the Marlborough Heritage sector.



10 May 2021