

My name is Dorothy Pilkington, I am presenting the submission of Historic Hawke's Bay. I am an honorary life member of Heritage New Zealand, in 2005 I was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit for my work for conservation, and my academic qualification includes papers on New Zealand history. I have published a number of articles and books on aspects of New Zealand History, mainly relating to the Manawatu and the Hawke's Bay regions.

I am actually struggling to understand the logic to this hearing today. The purpose is set out as being a plan change to provide for a new Mission Special Character Zone on the site of the Mission Estate Winery and concert venue, and yet neither the buildings that form the nucleus of this site, nor the surrounding vineyard has any official status as an historic place.

That is, at the least <sup>an</sup> anomaly, and at the worst, a nonsense.

The area proposed for special character status comprises a residential area, a landscape and visitor precinct, productive rural, and rural residential precinct.

There is consistent and constant emphasis in the summary and explanation report on "maintaining and enhancing the character of the landscape", including woodland planting around the Grande Maison, and discreetly placed Art Cabins for accommodation in the woods.

It is evident that, basically, the special character has developed from the rich history of this site. The land has already yielded up a considerable amount of evidence of how the area was used by Maori prior to European colonization and the buildings on the land involved in the Plan Change are the Grande Maison and associated buildings that were originally built for the missionary Marist Brothers as their Hawke's Bay base.

And yet, this very important land and these landmark buildings in the story not only of Hawke's Bay, but the whole of the country, are currently not listed in either the Napier City's District Plan or by Heritage New Zealand as an historic area.

**This is a historic place that has no official recognized status as a historic place.**

In her archaeological report on the proposed Mission Special Character Zone, Dianne Harlow, lays emphasis on the historic significance of the Grande Maison building, for both the story of the Marist Brothers missionary presence in New Zealand and, further, points to the pivotal importance of the brothers' Pakowhai-Meeanee-Greenmeadows vineyards as the foundation of the wine industry in New Zealand. In the Cultural Impact report prepared by Ngati Parau, the writers add to this, highlighting how their ancestors used and inhabited this area with its abundant food supply, and in the colonial era, their relationship with the Brothers, and also, in particular with Mother Suzanne Aubert, as an important part of their story.

It is therefore absurd that currently the buildings and site have absolutely no recognised heritage protection. And I note here that the absence of any submission either in support

or opposition as part of this hearing regarding the Plan Change from Heritage New Zealand is a significant lack, and highlights further the necessity for not only the Grande Maison, but also the surrounding land to be listed as a heritage property in the Napier District Plan, and with Heritage New Zealand.

Put in the most extreme terms, the Mission buildings and vineyard currently have absolutely no legal protection from demolition or development of the land, apart from the requirements currently set out in the Napier District Plan and the proposal in Plan Change 12.

We support the design outcomes set out in the Mission Special Character Zone Structure Plan that include the requirement to retain the visual dominance of the Grande Maison building as the keynote building (Design Outcome 15) and to retain the Grande Maison as the most visually prominent keynote building ( Design Outcome 18); however, these outcomes do not relate to the conservation and preservation into the future of the building itself. Such outcomes, although worthy, are insufficient protection for a property and building with such a long, rich and meaningful multicultural history.

It is evident from the very fact that a Plan Change is currently being sought, that the area in this neighbourhood is gradually being subdivided for housing. The proposed design outcomes may be sufficient and commendable in the current situation, at a time when the Mission property is still only on the outer edge of the burgeoning suburban development of Greenmeadows, but what is outlined in the proposal being discussed at this hearing signals clearly that the owners themselves are now initiating a step toward the day when the Grand Maison will no longer be sited in a rural environment.

The current owners have shown themselves to be extremely responsible and respectful owners of this heritage jewel, but ownership in perpetuity by Marist Brothers cannot be guaranteed. Circumstances change, despite the best of intentions, and the only way to ensure that this pivotal and evocative part of our local and national history will always be here for future generations, is via heritage listing. When a property is so iconic and has such heritage importance, the conservation and preservation of that history for future generations must be set firmly in place. In this context the care and respect of a current owner is praiseworthy, but it is simply not enough to secure into the future the physical manifestation of the past story of the property.

Therefore, we seek immediate initiation of the process to list this building and property, as a place of heritage significance in Napier's District Plan in tandem with the Plan Change process. And, although listing it in the District Plan is the mechanism that will provide protection, this process should also involve listing with Heritage New Zealand, particularly in view of the fact that this is such a nationally significant site. There is currently a National Historic Landmarks list of places of outstanding national heritage value under consideration by Heritage New Zealand and I believe that this is exactly the kind of building and property that would be considered as an entry on this list.

As a final comment, in the archaeological report of a site of the post-1900 European era of human activity is identified. The site numbered as V21/375 on the map is the location of

the pedestal of the Mission observatory. As described in the report an astronomical observatory was originally constructed at the Meeanee seminary by Father David Kennedy. Halley's Comet was observed from there in 1910, and some of the clearest photographs of this event were taken from that observatory. In addition Fr Kennedy trained the New Zealand Government's first meteorologist at the Meeanee observatory. The observatory was moved with the seminary buildings to the Greenmeadows site in 1911, and this pedestal is the only surviving reminder of the Mission observatory, which had its iron dome ripped off in a storm late in 1912, and was never rebuilt because of lack of finance during the World War 1 period. There is currently no protection in place for this pedestal, and we request that, as part of the Plan Change, the process should be initiated to list the pedestal as an item of heritage significance in the District Plan.

Relative to the development objectives of the Mission Special Character Zone as set out in the Summary and Explanation Report, we most strongly support and advocate for the objective

"to protect the visual amenity value of this landscape as a backdrop to Taradale and the City of Napier and in particular the integrity of the skyline." This last feature of the skyline, is a crucial element in achieving this objective and we note and commend the many features recommended and suggested in the supporting documents to ensure that this is achieved.

However, again, we believe that, in the future, this objective should not have to be repeatedly sought, in order to be maintained if and when any further development is envisaged. The protection of a valued landscape on this property needs to become integral to the heritage protection of the buildings and curtilage of the property.