



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND  
POUHERE TAONGA

## **PROPOSED THAMES COROMANDEL DISTRICT PLAN**

### **SUBMISSION BY HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND POUHERE TAONGA**

#### **STATEMENT OF ROBIN BYRON**

**05 MARCH 2015**

1. My name is Robin Elizabeth Byron. I am employed as a Heritage Advisor for Architecture with the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (“Heritage NZ”) in its Northern Regional Office which is based in Auckland. I have been in this capacity with Heritage New Zealand for the past almost ten years.
2. I have had 35 years’ experience in the field of architecture since my graduation with a Bachelor of Architecture from the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto (Canada) in 1979.
3. I am a registered architect with the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, Canada and am an affiliate member of the New Zealand Institute of Architects. I have been involved in professional practice in Canada (Toronto and Vancouver), England (Cambridge) and New Zealand (Auckland), and since coming to New Zealand 23 years ago have also taught architecture for a number of years at the University of Auckland’s School of Architecture.
4. I have completed studies in architectural conservation from the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York, and at the International Laboratory for Architecture and Urban Design in Urbino, Italy (the focus of which was working in historic environments).
5. I am a Board member of International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) New Zealand, and follow its precepts and principles.
6. My work includes the assessment and provision of advice on development proposals that involve heritage places, in particular those that are entries on the New Zealand Heritage List. This on occasion has involved presenting evidence to the Council and to the Environment Court on applications. I also advise on the disbursement of incentive grants that Heritage NZ has available for appropriate works involving Category 1 places on that List.

7. I assisted Heritage NZ in the drafting of its submission in respect of the topics related to the scheduling of heritage places that I am giving evidence on.
8. My evidence is in support of the submission of Heritage New Zealand where it sought to have a number of places that are entries on the New Zealand Heritage List included (Appendix A1.3).

## **HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND LISTED PLACES PROPOSED FOR EXCLUSION**

### **GENERAL**

9. The Thames Coromandel District Council should be commended for their efforts to include many new places (in addition to the already known identified places) on the Historic Heritage Schedule. The schedule recognize the rich variety of heritage places that characterize and define the long and multi-textured history and culture of this very significant region of New Zealand.
10. I am very supportive of the intent, following the review carried out by Conservation Architect Jane Matthew and in large part supported in the Council Staff 's *Section 42A Hearing Report and Section 32AA Further Evaluation Report*, to re-instate several of the places excluded in the notified version of the Plan but originally included in the previous schedule. It resulted in a number of places that are listed with Heritage New Zealand, and which they were concerned about being excluded, being returned to the schedule.
11. Heritage New Zealand, however, has a number of places that are included on our list that in the latest Proposed Thames Coromandel District Plan revised schedule (24-25 February 2015 – Appendix 2 Historic Heritage Schedule) are still proposed to be deleted. It is my view that they all retain inherent heritage values and that they meaningfully contribute to an understanding of the heritage contexts in which they are situated.
12. The reason given for many of the exclusions from the Plan was that there was not sufficient information found about the history of the places or people associated with them. As these values are only a couple of the criteria that may be considered in conferring heritage significance, many of the places excluded do have values that satisfy other outlined criteria. Some have architectural and aesthetic values associated with them, and importance for the way they contribute to representative aspects of the history of the region, its early settlement and/or wider historic landscape that makes them worthy inclusions.
13. The revised schedule now recommends re-instatement of the places that are highlighted in yellow on the following Heritage New Zealand submission list (Appendix A1.3) of their listed places that were originally excluded. As stated in paragraph 10, I fully support the inclusion of those highlighted on the list to the schedule.

14. My evidence will specifically address those places not highlighted which remain excluded from the Historic Heritage Schedule.

	List Status	Name	Location
<b>Add the following to Table 3: Coromandel-Colville Historic Heritage Items</b>			
4611	Historic Place Category 2	Briars House	Tiki Rd (S.H.25), COROMANDEL
4617	Historic Place Category 2	Cottage	Watt Street, COROMANDEL
4625	Historic Place Category 2	Methodist Church (Former)	Rings Rd, COROMANDEL
4639	Historic Place Category 2	McNeill House	230 Watt St, COROMANDEL
4642	Historic Place Category 2	Old Davies Homestead	1195 Tiki Rd, COROMANDEL
4651	Historic Place Category 2	Schubert House	25 Watt St, COROMANDEL
4656	Historic Place Category 2	Ward Cottage	229 Hauraki Rd, COROMANDEL
4670	Historic Place Category 2	House (Former Vicarage)	236 Tiki Rd, COROMANDEL
<b>Add the following to Table 5: Thames Historic Heritage Items</b>			
2675	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	758 Pollen St, THAMES
2677	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	736 Pollen St, THAMES
2678	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	754 Pollen St, THAMES
2679	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	738-742 Pollen St, THAMES
2681	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	746-748 Pollen St, THAMES
2683	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	724 Pollen St, THAMES
4666	Historic Place Category 2	Burke Street Wharf	Waiotahi Creek Rd, THAMES
4672	Historic Place Category 2	Shortland Wharf	Jellicoe Crescent, THAMES
5384	Historic Place Category 2	House	306 Richmond St, Shortland, THAMES
5481	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	710 Pollen St, THAMES
5482	Historic Place Category 2	Shop Frontage	720 Pollen St, THAMES

**BRIARS HOUSE, Tiki Rd (S.H.25), COROMANDEL (# 70 Cat 2 listed with HNZPT 1986)**

15. Briars House is an 1890s Category 2 house listed with Heritage New Zealand. It has been alleged to have little value because of its unremarkable history and architecture.
16. Ms Matthews acknowledges the value of places that reflect the representative aspects of the history of the area and its evidence of early settlement. In respect of this place she notes that architecturally the place reflects the period and villa style/types evident in Coromandel town. Because it is outside of the Historic Heritage area in Coromandel town, she states that it is inappropriately protected with its listing removed. In spite of these statements, it has not been re-instated to the amended schedule.
17. I would contend that it represents a typical and what appears to be largely original villa farmhouse from the turn of the century in a setting which gives a tangible sense of the rural farming landscape important to region. It does not have to be remarkable in its architectural expression, nor steeped in social connections to form a significant part of the historical landscape of the Coromandel area. I am of the view that it deserves retention on the heritage schedule and

an appropriate level of protection that that represents because, as Ms Matthews also identifies, it contributes to the history of the area and pattern of settlement outside of the town, and is connected with the important farming context and landscape.

**METHODIST CHURCH (FORMER), 745 Rings Road, Coromandel (# 4625 Cat 2 listed HNZPT 1986)**

18. The Methodist Church was constructed in 1898 to relieve the pressure of a growing congregation that could no longer be accommodated in the first Methodist Church built in 1871. It is understood to have been rebuilt then in 1948 or 1950 to the current style using parts and materials salvaged from the 1898 church.



original Coromandel Methodist Church (left), 2<sup>nd</sup> Methodist Church (middle), current Methodist Church (from early postcard - right)

19. Without investigating how much of the original material was re-used, how it was used and why, and what the background story is to the rebuilding of the church in 1948, we cannot make the supposition that the church is of little heritage value. These are the nature of the questions we would ask if undertaking a review.

20. It is interesting in my view that the church was re-interpreted and redesigned using salvaged materials from the previous church. This has some interest and value in itself and indicates the continuing adaptation to the church's needs and times. In my view the church should stay on the list of heritage places until more can be ascertained regarding its provenance and heritage component parts.

**McNEILL HOUSE, 230 Watt Street, Coromandel (# 4639, Cat 2 listed HNZPT 1986)**

21. This modest villa dwelling was excluded due to lack of information about it.

22. It is clear however that 230 Watt Street it is a small 19th century villa which is in relatively original condition. While there are several examples of dwellings on the main thoroughfare (variously Wharf, Kapanga and Rings Road) through town, there are few examples off the main route tangibly representing the pattern of early settlement off the primary street through the town, and of a typology representing the simple worker/miner dwellings. The adjacency of 230 Watt Street to 222 Watt Street (which is proposed to be re-instated to the schedule) is significant

as they represent a small grouping of early settlement together illustrating variable small dwelling types for residents of modest means. As many other places that would have been contemporary in date with them in the vicinity are no longer extant in this street, it is important to retain as a grouping.

23. The fact that these are captured by the Historic Heritage area does not offer sufficient protection for these places and warrant individual identification.

**OLD DAVIES HOMESTEAD, 1195 Tiki Road, Coromandel (#4642, Cat 2 listed HNZPT 1986)**

24. There has been an assumption that because it appears to be in a poor condition that it is inappropriate for listing. The condition is not a measure of heritage values. In my view insufficient investigation has been made to ascertain its potential values.
25. The fact that in spite of the modifications that have been made to adapt it to a wool shed, the place appears genuinely authentic. The fact that so much has not happened to the place in these terms (original materials, etc.) may in fact add to its significance, rather than detracting from it.
26. Moreover its current adaptive re-use for agricultural activity continues and reflects the agricultural use of the surrounding and original context, and it also demonstrates that these activities did not always occur in purpose built structures.
27. Its position set back from the road reflects the original pattern of settlement and land subdivision, and the original context survives well.
28. Davies was an early settler to Coromandel, and as the place is still owned by the family there is continuity of ownership over its long history.
29. I believe further assessment should be undertaken in respect of the historic, social, architectural, and archaeological values associated with this old Davies Homestead.

**SCHUBERT HOUSE, 25 Watt Street, Coromandel (#4651, Cat 2 listed HNZPT 1986)**

30. The house known as the Schubert House at 22 Watt Street was noted in the *TCDC Heritage Review Project - Consultant's Summary Report*, but erroneously indicated as 2 Watt Street. It was noted as having no information on the Item Identification Sheet, and a direction to review heritage values and placement on District Plan schedule.
31. Heritage New Zealand has seen no subsequent evidence that a review occurred. Nowhere in the further documents or review by Ms Matthews is the house referred to. Work should be carried out to complete an assessment of the values associated with it, as it appears to have been missed out for consideration beyond the initial survey.

32. I am of the view that the villa contributes importantly, and prominently given its corner position, to an understanding of the development of Coromandel town, it has important architectural and aesthetic values, and should be included on the schedule.

**HOUSE (FORMER VICARAGE) 234 Tiki Road, Coromandel (#4670 Category 2 listed HNZPT 1986)**

33. The justification for the removal of the former Vicarage at 234 Tiki Road is that because of subdivision of the property at the front and rear of the house there is no visual connection to church and cemetery.
34. That assumes a visual disconnection from the vantage point of Tiki Road, yet the important visual relationship is from the Church itself across the cemetery to the Vicarage as is illustrated by the Google Earth image below. While there has been compromise to the setting, there is still a tangibly visual and physical link between the Church, Cemetery and Vicarage. In that way the more important relationship is maintained and in my view warrants its continued inclusion.
35. While Ms Matthews concedes that there are impacts of the development around the Vicarage on the curtilage, I do not agree with the position that they have been diminished to the degree that it be deleted, as it still enjoys a meaningful relationship with the Cemetery and Church from the vantage point of the Church, which is the most important and significant visual connection.
36. It is also in my view worth noting that while the development around the Vicarage has had an impact on the setting, the largely original Vicarage is extant and its heritage values do not rely exclusively on its setting. The development around the Vicarage is also reversible in time.



**BURKE STREET WHARF, Waiohahi Creek Road, Thames (# 4666 Cat 2 listed HNZPT 1986)**

37. The Burke Street Wharf has been acknowledged to be of historic significance, and of significance in terms of surroundings and its contribution to the context, but because it has been determined to be below the mean high water mark it comes under the jurisdiction of the Waikato regional Council. I agree with Ms Matthews' suggestion that this should be noted on the Record Form.

**CONCLUSION**

38. While Heritage New Zealand is very supportive of the revised proposed Historic Heritage Schedule, there are still omissions related to a few of the Heritage New Zealand listed places as I have discussed in my evidence.

39. The identified places that are the subject of this evidence have been listed with Heritage New Zealand since 1986, nearly thirty years. They have endured, they retain integrity, significance in their own right, and also in the way they contribute meaningfully to variously the heritage of the town of Coromandel and to the wider Coromandel outlying area.

40. These places need to be more thoroughly considered for retention on the schedule.