

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF

O A M A R U W H I T E S T O N E C I V I C T R U S T

Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust.

It is my great pleasure to present the first annual report of the Board of the Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust.

Background

It is useful to start with a brief history of the background to the establishment of the Trust.

As a result of a request from the former Oamaru Borough Council in 1987, the then Minister of Tourism the Honourable Mike Moore made available a special grant from the Tourist and Publicity Department to fund a feasibility study into the Redevelopment of the Harbour/Tyne Street area of Oamaru. On the advice of a special committee, the Council selected Arthur Young to carry out the study which was commissioned after additional finance was made available by Trust Bank Otago Ltd, The Oamaru Licensing Trust, The Oamaru Borough Council and the N.Z. Historic Places Trust.

Arthur Young's report to the Council was delivered in March 1988. As a result of recommendations containing the report the Council moved to establish the Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust

Establishment of the Trust

The Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust has been registered as a Charitable Trust. The initial members of the Trust consisted of His Worship, the Mayor (or his alternate), five members of the public appointed by the Council after considerable public consultation and one member appointed by the North Otago Regional Committee of the Historic Places Trust.

The members appointed were:-

Mr R.J. Denny
Mr J.D. Polson
Mr R.L. Bloor
Mr D.A. Wilson
Mrs A. Neill
Mr J. Kong
Mr G.L. Berry (Historic Places)

At the first meeting of the Trust in January 1989, Mr J.D. Polson was elected Chairperson. Mr G.B. Sewell was appointed Secretary and Mr. J.N. Read was appointed Treasurer.

The objects of the Trust as set out in the Trust Deed are as follows:-

- (a) To ensure the preservation enhancement renovation and appropriate redevelopment of the Harbour/Tyne Street Historic precinct of Oamaru Town its buildings streets supporting townscape and harbour environs.
- (b) To ensure the preservation enhancement renovation and appropriate redevelopment of the historic buildings generally and the environs of the town of Oamaru and the North Otago countryside.
- (c) To promote a civic environment whereby the Town of Oamaru, its surroundings, and its adjacent countryside and coastline becomes a resource for the use, benefit and enjoyment of all Oamaru and North Otago citizens and all visitors to the area.
- (d) To undertake and conduct at the request of any Territorial Authority the administration of any historic buildings or historic precinct in Oamaru and North Otago where such local authority is the owner or lessor of such buildings including the preservation enhancement restoration and appropriate redevelopment of such historic buildings or historic precinct and for that purpose to have all the powers in relation to such administration and the conduct thereof as are contained in Clause 5 hereof in which the general powers of the Trust are set forth.
- (e) To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the Town of Oamaru and its surroundings and adjacent North Otago countryside and coastline and its associated historical and architectural and character.
- (f) To preserve, develop and improve buildings and features of general public amenity or historic interest or beauty.
- (g) To create or improve features of beauty of interest in and about the Town of Oamaru and its contiguous countryside and coastline.
- (h) To encourage where it is considered desirable the use of historic buildings for tourist and commercial purposes promoting employment and business opportunities for the citizens of North Otago.
- (i) To promote high standards in architecture, landscape, management, building, and town and country planning.
- (j) To promote knowledge of and interest in the objects of the Trust by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures,

publications, education courses and other forms of instructions and publicity.

- (k) To maintain communication with and co-operation with Government and its agencies persons or corporate bodies in New Zealand (including membership of other bodies corporate) for the purpose of promoting directly or indirectly the objects of the Trust PROVIDED that all objects hereinbefore specified shall be deemed to be objects relating solely to New Zealand.

Purchase of Buildings

Immediately following its establishment the Trust took over the negotiations to purchase eight buildings in Harbour and Tyne Streets from Wrightson Properties. Eventually the Trust was able to enter into a contract to purchase the buildings for \$80,000.00. This was possible because of a major grant received from the Alexander McMillan Trust of \$100,000.00. It is important to acknowledge the role of the North Otago Regional Committee of the Historic Places Trust in commencing and continuing negotiations with Wrightsons prior to the establishment of the Trust and in lodging the initial funding application with the Alexander McMillan Trust.

It is clear that as a result of the Alexander McMillan Trust and the consequent purchase from Wrightson Properties the Trust got off to a flying start. The importance of retaining this impetus can not be overstated.

The Trust has also acquired the Criterion Hotel building from Gillies Foundry and Engineering Co. Limited. This has been achieved by way of exchange with one of the Tyne Street buildings. The Trust has a first option to re-purchase the exchanged building and has placed a heritage covenant on the building as well. I take this opportunity of recording our appreciation to the Gillies Group (and Messrs George and Bernard Gillies in particular) for their helpfulness and forbearance in bringing this arrangement to a conclusion to the mutual benefit of Gillies and the Trust.

The Trust continues to work for opportunities to purchase properties in the area. We are however limited by funds available and the willingness of existing owners to dispose of their properties.

Specific Buildings owned by Trust

1. Loan and Mercantile Building

This building is currently let as a wool store to Elders Wool on a yearly basis.

2. **Neill's Store**

This is the building between the Loan and Mercantile Building and Anderson's Store. We are currently making applications for funding to restore the facade, re-surface the floor and re-roof this building. Negotiations are currently underway with interested parties to lease the property.

3. **Anderson's Store**

This building has been completely re-roofed and the restoration of the basic facade is complete. The pediment on top of the facade will be completed as funds permit.

Renovation is expensive. The Contract price for the roof itself was \$30,000.00. The total amount spent on this building so far is \$76,069.00.

The front portion has been let on a temporary basis. Negotiations for longer term tenancies are proceeding.

It is clear that the Trust's renovation of this building shows the way for future work on the Trust's building. We acknowledge in particular the advice and assistance of Mr. Bill Dooley and his staff in completing this work.

4. **Sumpter's Store**

This building has been leased on a long term basis to Willetts Furniture Co. Limited who manufacture period furniture from recycled timber.

The Trust has re-roofed the rear annex of this building and refurbished and repaired the doors and windows of this building.

We are very pleased indeed to have arranged a lease of this building for a use so compatible with the aims and objects of the Trust.

The frontage to the building has been completely scraped down by the Trusts own volunteer project work team. This work has just been completed.

5. **Meek's Store**

Members will recall that this building contains the seed cleaning machinery that was purchased as part of the agreement with Wrightson Properties.

This building badly needs to be re-roofed and we are currently seeking funding for this purpose and cleaning the facade.

The building is currently used as a base for the Project Workforce.

In the longer term, it is envisaged that a possible use for this building is as a vintage machinery museum. An integral part of the display would be the seed cleaning machinery once it has been cleaned down and refurbished.

6. Two Buildings Adjacent to De Geest Joinery

These two buildings have been leased to the existing tenants. One building for two years and the other for two years with three rights of renewal. This is an example of the Trust's policy to have a mixture of shorter and longer tenancies in order to ensure that they fit in with the Trust's orderly long term program of restoration of its properties.

7. Criterion Hotel

The Trust is in the process of making the building weather proof and vandal proof. Restoration of this key building will be a major project and the Trust will not be moving on it until all the necessary research has been done and the funding is available to complete the job properly. The cost will be immense.

Leasing of Buildings

The Trust has adopted a policy of a mixture of short and long term leases of its buildings to facilitate a co-ordinated program of redevelopment and restoration consistent with maximum rental income.

Funding and Financial Policy

The Trust's regular income is mainly from rentals and members subscriptions. The Trust has adopted a policy that running costs are to be funded from this regular income. This means that grant income can be used specifically for the purchase of buildings and restoration and redevelopment of buildings.

Major grants, donations or amounts received in the financial year under review are as follows:-

Alexander McMillan Trust	\$100,000.00
Trust Bank Otago Limited	\$ 25,000.00
New Zealand Tourist & Publicity Department (CAPS Grant)	\$ 77,000.00
Historic Places Trust (received after 31/1/90)	\$ 15,000.00

New Zealand Lotteries Board Heritage	
Fund (received after 31/1/90)	\$ 35,000.00
Mrs E. Mulligan	\$ 2,000.00

The Lotteries Board grant was specifically ear-marked for payment of the Project Manager's salary.

The Trust is continuing to make applications for grants and donations as opportunities become available. Our continuing progress depends on the successful outcome of these applications.

I take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Noel Read for his work as Treasurer of the Trust. The job has been much larger than was originally envisaged and as a result he has indicated that he is unable to continue. The treasury function will now be undertaken by the Trust's staff. A new Treasurer will however be appointed to oversee this aspect of the Trust's work.

Existing Owners in the Area

The Trust has endeavoured to cooperate with other building owners and tenants in the Harbour/Tyne Street area. We are encouraging other owners to restore and redevelop their buildings in line with the theme "A Victorian Town at Work" or recommended by the feasibility study. The enthusiasm of our neighbours has grown as they see what has been achieved by the Trust.

Of particular note is the work being done by the North Otago Art Society in respect of the Customs building which they own. We have assisted them with letters of support for their funding applications and look forward to continuing a close association with them.

We also commend Gillies Foundry on the work they have done on the Tyne Street facade of this building they took in exchange for the Criterion Hotel. The bollards are particularly impressive and will serve as a good practical purpose of protecting the building from damage.

Oamaru Steam and Rail Society

The Trust has worked co-operatively with the Steam and Rail Society. We have given them moral support and have facilitated their purchase of a Railway building which they are redeveloping as their Headquarters. We look forward to a continuing good relationship as their activities in the area are complementary to those of the Trust.

Oamaru Employment Resource Centre

Through Board Member David Wilson the Trust has been closely associated with the Oamaru Employment Resource Centre. Prior to

the appointment of our Project Manager, much of the administrative work of the Trust was handled by David. Some work was done on contract but a large portion was voluntary.

The Employment Resource Centre has been responsible for assisting with the Restart and Voluntary Employment Schemes which the Trust has been involved with through the Labour Department.

Our Project Manager was originally housed in the Employment Resource Centre Office until alternative more suitable accommodation in Harbour Street became available.

Our major ongoing association with the Employment Resource Centre is in respect of the New Venture Workspace Scheme which is being developed by a Trust Sub-Committee consisting of David Wilson, Reg Bloor and Jim Kong.

Originally Anderson's Store was allocated as the venue for this development. However another more suitable site is now being investigated. It is hoped that this project will be underway before the end of this year.

The creation of new jobs in the area is one of the Trust's major concerns and this is seen as a very important project.

Relationship with the Waitaki District Council and the former Oamaru Borough Council

The Trust continues to enjoy a close relationship with the District Council. This relationship commenced with the Oamaru Borough Council and continues to flourish. All of the buildings have been purchased in the name of the Council as this is one of the ways of demonstrating the "solidity" of the project to the outside world.

The link has been made closer by the active membership of the Trust Board of His Worship the Mayor Mr. Reg Denny. His assistance and guidance have proved invaluable.

The Trust has also been fortunate in having the services of Council Officer Graeme Sewell as Secretary and Noel Read as Treasurer.

The Council and the Trust have agreed that rates and ground rental shall be payable only when buildings are leased out by the Trust on a commercial basis. This has given us some breathing space financially while restoration of individual buildings is undertaken.

We look forward to the continuing support of the Council for our important project.

Town Planning

I am pleased to report that scheme change No. 4 creating a "Harbour/Tyne Street Preservation and Redevelopment Zone" has been advertised by the Council and the period for lodging objections has closed.

Now that the scheme change has been advertised the tight controls are in full force and effect.

Trust members George Berry and Reg Bloor are on the advisory committee of the Council which consider the non-notified applications required when any work is to be done in the area affecting the buildings.

We, the Trust, thank the Council for its support in this area. Special thanks are due to the Council's Town Planning Consultant, Jim McCracken for his excellent work in the preparation of the scheme change.

North Otago Regional Committee Historic Places Trust

The North Otago Regional Committee of the Historic Places Trust have given invaluable support to the Trust during this initial period. The good work done by the Historic Places Trust over the years is now starting to bear fruit.

They have been instrumental in obtaining the support of the N.Z. Historic Places Trust for the proposal.

Special thanks are due to George Berry, Rodney Grater, Helen Stead, Beverley Ross and Yvonne Walker and Lois Galer in particular for their respective contributions.

We continue to rely on the assistance of the Historic Places Trust Conservation Architect, Chris Cochrane for advice and assistance.

Project Manager

The Trust advertised the position of Project Manager late last year. I am pleased to introduce to members Mr. Fergus Robertson who was appointed to the post in December. The initial Contract is for one year. We are hopeful that the funding from the Lotteries Board will be extended for at least a further year so that the Contract can be extended.

Fergus brings to the job a lifetime of experience in the Engineering field. He was born and raised in Oamaru and has returned home to offer us his skills for this project.

Fergus has undertaken his task with enthusiasm and energy and has brought a professional focus to the work of the Trust.

On behalf of the Trust I thank him for his continuing efforts.

Staff

Mrs Ann Christison has been appointed as clerical assistant for an initial period of six months. We are hopeful that this will become a permanent position. Ann is undertaking a good deal of the day to day administration of the Trust's activities.

Mr. Elvyn Latta has been appointed as the foreman of the Project Work Scheme under a Restart Program. His efforts in directing the practical work of the Trust are most appreciated.

Four members of the former volunteer work team have now been appointed under the Restart Program and all of the Restart positions are for one years duration.

We are extremely grateful for the work done by these people first as volunteers and latterly on a full time basis. Their efforts have allowed the project to proceed much more quickly than otherwise would have been the case.

Membership

The Trust currently has 159 individual members seven endowment members and 15 corporate members.

We are about to embark on a major membership drive. We are hopeful that Oamaru people will now see that this project is now a reality and not "pie in the sky".

We thank our existing members and look forward to their continuing support.

Tourism Potential

The tourism potential of the area is now becoming more apparent. More and more visitors to the area are clearly obvious and the Trust has taken steps to co-ordinate tourist activity in the area. We are hopeful that this will generate income for the Trust in particular and this town in general.

This is one aspect of our work to which a great deal of time will have to be devoted in the current year.

We are grateful for the cooperation we have received from the Forrester Gallery and the Architectural Tour Guides Group. If we are to obtain further financial assistance from the Tourist & Publicity Department we will have to demonstrate specific increases in tourism figures.

Promotion

The Trust has adopted an aggressive promotion policy and uses every available opportunity to promote the activities of the Trust.

The most successful specific promotions have been the Gala Opening on the 4th November 1989 and the Market Day in March of this year. Both were extremely successful occasions and this format will be repeated. The next Market Day will be in early November 1990. Our particular thanks are due to David Wilson for organising the Gala Opening and Fergus Robertson the March event. We are also grateful to Honourable Fran Wilde Minister of Tourism for attending and officiating at our Gala Opening function.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to thank all of the existing Trust Board members for the tremendous amount of work they have put in to successfully establishing the Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust. This has been a massive task and all members have worked hard to achieve a successful result.

I believe that this is the most exciting project in North Otago for the last 50 years. The project leads New Zealand in Heritage restoration and redevelopment. The impetus must be retained and this requires the support of all members of the Trust and of all the citizens of North Otago. If we remain positive about the future of the Trust we will achieve our goal. The task often looks daunting but we will succeed.

I have pleasure in moving the adoption of this annual report.