

Canterbury Tales: The Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund Post-disaster management in New Zealand

Section 1

The Canterbury earthquakes, particularly 22 February 2011, caused tragic loss of life. There was also significant damage to many heritage buildings. The 6.3 magnitude earthquake on 13 June further compounded the many issues facing the region, and also put back the plans for heritage properties already damaged and ready for repair. The New Zealand Historic Places Trust (NZHPT) is working alongside property owners and leading authorities towards the best results for heritage, providing advice about damage to historic buildings and structures, and character homes.¹ This case study examines post-disaster management of heritage cities.

Whilst preparing assessments of the damage to heritage buildings for the authority responsible for signing off demolitions (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Agency) and the relevant district councils, NZHPT found that many could be repaired, and in order to minimise unnecessary clearing or removal, building owners were encouraged to seek appropriate professional advice.² However, a funding gap was identified between insurance cover and the actual cost of repairs and associated works including conservation works, structural upgrading and Building Code compliance works.³ There was a need to provide an incentive for heritage and character building owners to retain and restore their earthquake-damaged properties and in September 2010, the Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund was launched.⁴ The Fund consists of contributions from territorial authorities, the NZHPT and donations, which will be matched by the government who have set aside up to \$10 million (NZD).⁵ "The heritage buildings throughout Canterbury are an important part of the region's character and its history. The earthquake caused significant damage to many heritage and character buildings. The cost of their repair and restoration will be considerable, and it is appropriate that Government assists with local rebuilding and strengthening efforts to preserve this history." Said Hon. Christopher Finlayson Attorney-General and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage.⁶

Section 2

The purpose of the Fund is to help owners repair damage to heritage buildings caused by the Canterbury earthquake of 4 September 2010 and associated aftershocks. The Fund is for 'heritage buildings', a definition not limited to buildings listed in a District Plan or in the NZHPT's Register, historic areas, wahi tapu (Māori sacred sites) or wahi tapu areas.⁷

Eligible projects for funding (up to 50% of the total works cost) include repairs of damage caused by the earthquake and aftershocks; works required by the Building Act and Code; professional services relating to these works; temporary protective measures such as weatherproofing, stabilisation of the building, and cordons to protect the public. Funding for temporary protective measures and other urgent works, where necessary to protect the fabric of the building, may be approved. Repairs to retaining walls may be eligible for funding if essential to the structural integrity of the building.⁸

Section 3

Canterbury's heritage building stock suffered irretrievable loss in the wake of thousands of earthquakes and aftershocks. So that the precious few heritage buildings which remain and which are feasible to repair might be saved, the Fund was formed in late 2010 as a collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Christchurch, Selwyn and Waimakariri Councils and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust with grants from each

***Managing Heritage Cities in Asia and Europe:
The Role of Public-Private Partnerships***

contributing to start up capital. A generous \$1 million pledge from Fletcher Construction initiated the first significant grant for the restoration and reconstruction of a noted Christchurch Heritage building – the 1882 McKenzie and Willis building in High Street. Government pledged to match dollar-for dollar all donations made to the Fund, to a maximum of \$10 million.⁹

The Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund is an independent Trust, established by deed of trust and is administered by Trustees whose powers set out in the foundation document. The principal objective of the Fund is to raise funds for the preservation of heritage buildings and to allocate those funds to qualifying applicants in the best interest of the people and built environment of Canterbury. The Christchurch City Council lends support by covering some administrative functions and costs.¹⁰ It is an approved donee organisation, which entitles an individual or corporate donor to claim a tax credit, or deduction, for any donation over \$5.

The repair and restoration of heritage buildings in Canterbury will go on for a number of years. The Fund will be wound up when all funds are distributed, or at a date to be agreed between the Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage, Christchurch City, Selwyn, and Waimakariri District Councils, and the NZHPT. The relevant territorial authorities are tasked with monitoring all funded work and compliance. The Trustees report to the Minister for Culture and Heritage every six months on the donations received and total value of the Fund; the number of applications received; the number of applications considered by the Trustees; the number of applications approved; the total amount of funds allocated; a narrative of funded work; and a narrative of the outcomes achieved.¹¹

Section 4

"What is unique about this fund is its Government endorsement" said Anna Crighton, Chair, Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund. By prioritising places of greatest heritage significance, the Fund ensures that key features of Canterbury's heritage landscape are retained for the benefit of its communities and for future generations. The Fund has been as successful as its resources have allowed. But it has been difficult, too, to persuade some people that the heritage they own is vital for the city's rebuild. Many owners have been reluctant to retain their buildings and after investigation find the easy option is to demolish. Thus to advocate, encourage and incentivise retention remains a priority. The Fund has received in total approx \$9m, which testifies to its public appeal, of which \$8m has now been allocated. Other grants have been approved for saving the facades of key heritage buildings. Previously, 'façadism' was looked down upon by heritage purists, but most have now realised that keeping a façade (with a new building behind) is probably the only means of preserving a tangible memory, a landmark, a point of reference, the anchor of a corner site in some cases and the enhancement of the streetscape.¹²

Section 5

This Public-Private Partnership shows that:

- When selecting which eligible buildings will receive funding a key consideration of the Trustees is the degree to which the building represents a public benefit. Many heritage buildings which contribute positively to our shared built environment are held in private ownership.¹³
- It is only with the combined resources of central and local government and private owners that sufficient funding can be generated to address the funding gap for disaster-prone heritage buildings.

***Managing Heritage Cities in Asia and Europe:
The Role of Public-Private Partnerships***

- The Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Building Fund provides a possible model for new collaborative incentive initiatives enabling access to funding far beyond the resources of any one particular local authority acting alone.¹⁴
- There is on-going widespread interest in heritage in New Zealand and the Canterbury earthquakes, in particular, have stimulated a ground swell of public awareness about heritage risk and survival. This should be capitalised upon with effective strategies for heritage at both central and local government levels.¹⁵

The main recommendation coming out of this case study is that the development of new collaborative national, regional and district grant funds be considered that could operate in a similar manner, with public donations (eligible for tax credits) and government match-funding.

Section 6: This section will provide the contact information of the project co ordinator

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Section 7

¹ Website of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga
<http://www.historic.org.nz/en/Publications/CanterburyTales/NZHPT.aspx>

² Website of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga
<http://www.historic.org.nz/en/ProtectingOurHeritage/FAQs-Earthquake.aspx>

³ Website of Christchurch City Council
<http://www.ccc.govt.nz/homeliving/civildefence/chcheearthquake/heritage.aspx>

⁴ Website of New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage
<http://www.mch.govt.nz/node/894>

⁵ Ibid, Christchurch City Council

⁶ Website of Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund
<http://www.savecanterburyheritage.org.nz/about/>

⁷ Trust Deed of the Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund, 2011
http://www.savecanterburyheritage.org.nz/media/uploads/2012_05/CEHBF-Trust-Deed.PDF

⁸ Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund Operating Guidelines
<http://resources.ccc.govt.nz/files/CanterburyEarthquakeHeritageBuildingFundOperationalGuidelines.pdf>

⁹ Ibid, Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Speech to Save Our Heritage Panel Discussion on 23 March 2012 by *Anna Crighton, Chair, Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund Trust*, quoted on Historic Places Aotearoa website <http://historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz/100-plus-turn-up-to-the-save-our-heritage-panel-discussion/>

¹³ Ibid, Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Buildings Fund

¹⁴ Planning for Heritage Sustainability in New Zealand - A Safe Heritage Credit Scheme, by Robert McClean, Senior Heritage Policy Adviser, New Zealand Historic Places Trust, 2012 <http://www.conferenz.co.nz/whitepapers/planning-heritage-sustainability-new-zealand-safe-heritage-credit-scheme>

¹⁵ Ibid

Author profile

Catherine Leonard joined the UK National Trust in 1999, when she was responsible for the Trust's work with overseas heritage groups and managing the European Network of National Heritage Organisations. Catherine now heads the INTO Secretariat and is the strategic lead for the organisation's international co-ordination, including resource management, programme development, communications and relationships with INTO members, other ngos, policy makers and institutions worldwide. Catherine studied languages and literature at university and has spent time living and working abroad. Prior to joining the National Trust, Catherine worked for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.