

QUEEN'S PARK – A FORGOTTEN GEM

Queen's Park extends north from the intersection of Wadestown and Grant Roads, around the properties on the western side of Grant Road and Newman Terrace, and to the west of Grosvenor Terrace, as far as the properties on the south of Orchard Street.

Only a few people know the history of the oldest park in Thorndon – Queen's Park – developed in the 1890s from a pocket of the town belt, and so named by the Wellington City Council to commemorate Queen Victoria's 1897 diamond Jubilee.

Queen's Park is the part of the Town Belt between Wadestown Road and Grant Road/Grosvenor Terrace. It extends from the intersection of Grant Road and Wadestown Road, north to the gully south of Orchard Street.



This area began as a Victorian promenading park displaying exotic trees, shrubs and hedges, formed paths and entry gates. A stream and waterfall were a significant feature, reflecting the Victorian interest in wild landscapes. The park was originally planted with conifers and pine trees along with European deciduous trees, reflecting the ornamental planting fashions of the time.



Some of these notable trees remain: oaks, limes and silver birches, along with mature conifer and pine trees. These are a distinct feature unique to this area of the Town Belt and worth retaining - the current Town Belt Management Plan does not consider this.

At present the park is uncared for and, without signage, unknown and largely unused. Unfortunately, tree management has ceased so some of the trees are crowded and deteriorating, leaving the tracks feeling dark and unsafe.

It is time to seek a halt to this progressive decline and neglect of the Park. There is a model for the renewal of the park in the work undertaken since 2005 to Central Park in Brooklyn, which involved a Restoration Plan to set the vision for redevelopment.

Queen's Park has potential to be a great amenity area with its network of paths and public gardens for use by Thorndon residents and passers-through. It is time for the park to be restored.

The Thorndon Residents' Association will be approaching the Council to encourage restoration of Queen's Park. Work is in hand to establish a community group to provide input to this project, and a public walkover of the park is scheduled for 10am, Sunday November 19, 2017. Meet at the fountain on Grant Rd. Anyone with information to support the upgrading of the Park or who is interested in getting involved should contact Peter Steele: peterbsteel0@gmail.com

Membership Form for Thorndon Residents' Association Incorporated Society No. 2174304

Subscription \$15 per member (annual subscription period ends 31 March)

Pay by: Online Banking to ANZ Account 01 0505 0380782 00

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COUNCILLOR'S CORNER - NICOLA YOUNG

Locals are understandably upset by workshops to plan a cycleway along Thorndon Quay, partly because of the threat to parking which is vital for the types of business in the area. The workshops have been put 'on hold' as Council has not voted on a preferred route; alternatives include Aotea Quay and – in the longer term – the waterfront.

Parking restrictions are a continuing irritation for Thorndon residents as the demarcation of four zones (Kelburn, Clifton, Pipitea and Thorndon) means some Kelburn residents can park in parts of Thorndon, when Thorndon residents can't park in other parts of their own suburb. The City Planner has promised to include this issue in the looming city-wide parking review. I am also hoping to sort the vexing P120 parking restrictions, instituted when the stadium was built. Ideally the restrictions would be limited to business hours and during large stadium events so residents' friends can visit for longer than two hours!

The neglected state of Queen's Park, with its European-planting and deciduous trees, is another local issue. It certainly no longer fulfils its original 1897 intention – to celebrate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee.

Finally, some good news. Tinakori Hill /Te Ahumairangi is inner Wellington's highest point, at 303m (Mt Victoria is only 196m). Its old trig station was removed a long time ago, and Northland resident, Mr John Bickerton, has persuaded Wellington Water to fund a plaque to mark that this significant landmark was gazetted in 1841 as the highest point in the township of Wellington.



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Thorndon Farmers Market

<http://thorndonfarmersmarket.nz>



Have you ever wondered where the broccoli you were eating was grown? Or have you simply thought it would be great to support local producers? Well, the Thorndon Farmers Market is giving Wellingtonians a chance to buy local.

The market is held every Saturday morning 8.30 - 12.30, rain or shine, and helps connect locals to passionate regional food producers. It also provides a forum for educating the community about supporting and enjoying locally grown and produced food, including organic and spray free produce. The market includes in-season fruit and vegetable growers and producers from Wellington, the Kapiti Coast, Horowhenua, Hawkes Bay and the Wairarapa, boutique meat producers selling free range produce and an array of other treats and necessities. Regular buskers, entertainers and community fundraising. After shopping enjoy a coffee under the pohutakawa tree while you read the paper or chat to friends.

INVITATION TO DR BEN SCHRADER'S TALK 'RESIDENTIAL E AND THE 'SAVING' OF THORNDON'

Dr Ben Schrader's will talk on 'Residential E and the 'Saving' of Thorndon' Wednesday 15 November 7:30 at Thorndon School Hall, 20 Turnbull St.

In 1977 Wellington City Council confirmed Thorndon's Residential E ordinance: the first in New Zealand to give protection to an historic district. It was the culmination of a five year community campaign to protect the suburb's colonial built environment from further destruction following the driving of a motorway through its heart during the late 1960s. This talk begins by examining the rationale for the motorway and its route through Thorndon; its impact on the suburb's material social fabric, and why this led activists to promote the Residential E initiative. It then examines the ordinance's measures and how the proposal was received by the Thorndon and wider community. Consideration is also given to leading activists in the campaign and their motivations and ponders some of the legacies of the Residential E ordinance.

Ben Schrader is a public historian specialising in urban history and the history of the built environment. His most recent book was *The Big Smoke: New Zealand Cities 1840-1920* (2016), which was shortlisted for the 2017 Ockham book awards. His current project is 'Won and Lost: Saving New Zealand's Built Heritage, 1885-2016', which he is co-researching with Wellington heritage practitioner Michael Kelly. He was recently awarded the 2017 Copyright Licensing New Zealand Writer's Award for this project.

Please RSVP to wgtn@historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz

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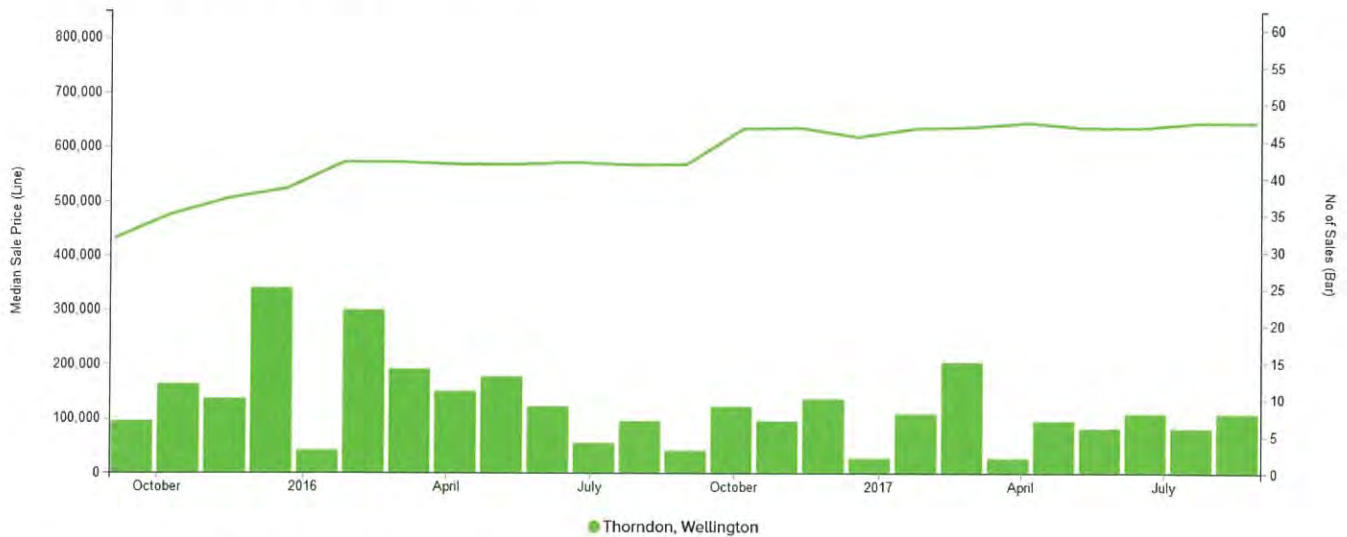
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*Average house prices in Thorndon have increased by more than \$200,000 in the last 2 years.

MARKET COMMENT

The waiting is over, and we are no longer being held in suspense and guessing on the outcome of the general election and its aftermath. There is no disputing that the uncertainty has had a dampening down effect on the real estate market, but we can now look forward to putting that all behind us and moving on. We now know who is leading the way in the governance of our country for the next three years and irrespective of whether we like the outcome of the MMP deliberations or not it should be business as usual looking forward.

There is a popular opinion that under the new government regime, the next year or two may see a continuation of the last few months quieter real estate market. Some market commentators are even suggesting that prices may fall! Based on our knowledge of the Wellington market however we have a more positive view and believe that Wellington will always enjoy a steady flow of home buyers in and out of the capital city thereby providing a reliable market for good homes.

Reports from reputable mortgage brokers indicate there is still a strong pool of pre-approved borrowers ready to buy and only waiting for the right house to come to the market. There has certainly been a shortage of property offered for sale in recent months and while this has impacted on sales numbers, it has meant that pricing levels have held up.

The lead in months to Christmas and in fact through until March/April has historically been an active time for real estate sales and we see no reason for this changing in the months ahead. We believe there will be a window of opportunity for both home buyers and sellers to achieve their housing objectives in this time and we look forward to assisting and offering advice to our clients. To home sellers, we urge you to call Barry now and let him plan a marketing programme that will maximise your selling opportunities and return you top market value.

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