

Gazebo

Wellington Botanic Garden



Summary of heritage significance

- The gazebo is an elegantly designed timber structure that has been influenced by the Edwardian and Carpenter Gothic styles.
- The gazebo is a well utilised shelter that has been associated with the Gardens for almost 100 years.
- The gazebo has landmark value due to its long association with the Botanic Gardens. It is in keeping with the Victorian style of the main garden in particular, and relates to the rustic style that was popular throughout the Botanic Gardens at the time.

District Plan:	Map 11, reference 28
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 1 DP 8530 (CT 48A/126), Wellington Land District
Heritage Area:	Botanic Gardens Heritage Area Map 11/17, reference 5
HPT Listed:	Part of HPT Botanic Gardens Heritage Area, register 7573
Archaeological Site:	Pre 1900 human activity on the site; Central City NZAA R27/270.
Other Names:	Gazebo, Summerhouse
Key physical dates:	1900s, placed on current site 1914
Architect / Builder:	
Former uses:	Civic facilities and recreation - Gazebo
Current uses:	Civic facilities and recreation - Gazebo
Earthquake Prone Status:	<i>Unknown at time of writing</i>

Extent: Cityview GIS



1.0 Outline History

1.1 History

This gazebo is a popular and elegant structure that has long been associated with the Botanic Garden, and is still used as a shelter and lookout for garden visitors. It is difficult to piece together the history of this gazebo, as little information from its early years has survived.

It appears that the gazebo was built as a trade exhibit representing the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners for the Labour Day celebrations on the 26th of October 1914. Minutes from a Wellington District Council meeting held in September of 1914 note that a request had been made of the Society to provide three members to work with the Council in the preparation of a trade exhibit.¹

On October 26 1914, the gazebo made its debut in the Labour Day procession. It was noted by the *Evening Post* that the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners had built a “large summer house with a trellised roof and diagonal braced sides ornamented with diamond shaped shields. The gazebo was made of heart of Totara, the best that can be got for the purpose, and was certainly well made and nicely designed”.²

Following the Labour Day procession, the Wellington Town Clerk wrote to the then secretary of the Carpenters Union, Mr Blatherwick, stating that he had been “directed by the Chairman of the Reserves Committee to inform you that he has consulted with the members of his committee regarding the gazebo used in the Labour Day Celebrations, and to offer you the sum of £15 for the purchase of the house. The Committee in making this offer do not make any condition that the money shall be devoted to the Patriotic Fund”.³ The next correspondence between the two men is a letter again from the town clerk stating “Sir, I have to confirm my telephone message to you of yesterday afternoon informing you that the council have agreed to purchase the Summerhouse offered to them for the sum of £20, delivery to be given at the Botanical Gardens”.⁴ It would appear that the gazebo was in its current position by the 1st of December 1914. According to a 1914 Wellington Carpenters Union Document, the Gazebo was “erected near the main walk in the Botanic Gardens”.⁵

There has been some controversy over the builder of the gazebo, with three different people claiming that they know who constructed it. This potentially fits with the history of the building inasmuch as the minutes of a Wellington District Council meeting state that three men from the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners were to be chosen to construct a display for the Labour Day celebration. Correspondence found by Wellington City Archive show that George Blatherwick was involved in the sale of the gazebo, and a letter from his daughter states that she remembers helping her father ‘spending many hours holding a light while he hammered and chiselled’.

¹ 89-317-10/09: District Council (Wellington) Minute Book 1913-1915. District Council Meeting 25/09/1914.

² ‘Labour Day’, *Evening Post*, 26 October 1914, Page 2.

³ “Heritage building – Botanic Garden Summer House”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Sum, Wellington City Council Records; “Heritage building – Botanic Garden Gardener’s Sheds”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Gar, Wellington City Council Records

⁴ “Heritage building – Botanic Garden Summer House”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Sum, Wellington City Council Records; “Heritage building – Botanic Garden Gardener’s Sheds”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Gar, Wellington City Council Records

⁵ “Appendix 3”, Peter Lohr, ‘Conservation Plan for The Summerhouse, Botanical Gardens, Wellington’ Unpublished Conservation Plan, October 1999.

This story is echoed in the memory of another man, quoted in an article by David McGill, saying that 'he had held the candle as a lad while his father built it to be put on a dray for the Labour Day procession'. A third story is also presented in the McGill article from a Mrs H. M. Smith, who says that it was erected by her great-grandfather William Mudge.⁶ It is extremely difficult to determine which of these stories is correct based on the information that has been found to date. Regardless of the builder, this gazebo is an elegant structure that has been influenced heavily by the Edwardian Carpenter Gothic style. It is a light timber structure with a projecting gable and variations of the Gothic foil motif.

1.2 Timeline of modifications

Not assessed

1.3 Ownership history

1914 Wellington Botanic Garden (Wellington City Council)

1.4 Occupation history

Not assessed

1.5 Architect

Unknown

⁶ "Heritage building – Botanic Garden Summer House", 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Sum, Wellington City Council Records; "Heritage building – Botanic Garden Gardener's Sheds", 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Gar, Wellington City Council Records

2.0 Physical description

2.1 Architecture

The Botanic Garden gazebo is an elegantly designed timber structure that has been influenced by the Edwardian and Carpenter Gothic styles. The tradesmen have shown a lot of skill in the use, connection, and embellishment of the various timber components of the building. It has a trellised roof and diagonal braced sides ornamented with diamond shaped shields.

2.2 Materials

Heart Totara, possibly some redwood repairs.

2.3 Setting

This gazebo is an important and historical structure in the Botanic Garden and has been associated with the gardens for almost a century. It is in keeping with the Victorian style of the main garden in particular and relates to the rustic style that was popular throughout the Botanic Garden at the time. It contributes to the sense of place and continuity of the Botanic Gardens Heritage Area. It has strong public recognition by virtue of its age, location alongside a main path, and for its intriguing appropriateness in their garden setting.

3.0 Sources

89-317-10/09: District Council (Wellington) Minute Book 1913-1915. District Council Meeting 25/09/1914.

Lohr, Peter. 'Conservation Plan for The Summerhouse, Botanical Gardens, Wellington'. Unpublished Conservation Plan, October 1999.

Wellington City Council Records

Heritage building – Botanic Garden Summer House”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Sum, Wellington City Council Records; “Heritage building – Botanic Garden Gardener’s Sheds”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Gar, Wellington City Council Records

“Heritage building – Botanic Garden Summer House”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Sum, Wellington City Council Records; “Heritage building – Botanic Garden Gardener’s Sheds”, 2001, 1041-06-BOT-Gar, Wellington City Council Records

Papers Past

Evening Post, Monday Volume LXXXVIII, Issue 101, 26 October 1914, Page 2.
<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgibin/paperspast?a=d&d=EP19141026.2.17&cl=CL2.1914.10.26&e=-----10--1----0-->

Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance

Cultural heritage values

Aesthetic Value:

Architectural: *Does the item have architectural or artistic value for characteristics that may include its design, style, era, form, scale, materials, colour, texture, patina of age, quality of space, craftsmanship, smells, and sounds?*

The Botanic Garden Gazebo is an elegantly designed timber structure that has been influenced by the Edwardian and Carpenter Gothic styles. It was designed as a trade exhibit by the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and is, as a consequence, notable for the high quality of its design, materials and workmanship.

Townscape: *Does the item have townscape value for the part it plays in defining a space or street; providing visual interest; its role as a landmark; or the contribution it makes to the character and sense of place of Wellington?*

The gazebo has landmark value due to its long association with the Botanic Garden. It is in keeping with the Victorian style of the main garden in particular, and relates to the rustic style that was popular throughout the Botanic Garden at the time.

Group: *Is the item part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use?*

The gazebo is one of a group of heritage buildings, objects and trees that are situated within the boundary of the Botanic Gardens Heritage Area.

Historic Value:

Association: *Is the item associated with an important person, group, or organisation?*

The gazebo is a well utilised shelter and lookout in the Botanic Garden and has been associated with the Gardens for almost 100 years.

Association: *Is the item associated with an important historic event, theme, pattern, phase, or activity?*

Scientific Value:

Archaeological: *Does the item have archaeological value for its ability to provide scientific information about past human activity?*

Pre 1900 human activity on the site; Central City NZAA R27/270.

Educational: *Does the item have educational value for what it can demonstrate about aspects of the past?*

Technological: *Does the item have technological value for its innovative or important construction methods or use of materials?*

Social Value:

Public esteem: *Is the item held in high public esteem?*

The gazebo is a popular building with the public, and is a pleasant spot for visitors to the Botanic Gardens.

Symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual: Does the item have symbolic, commemorative, traditional, spiritual or other cultural value for the community who has used and continues to use it?

Inside the gazebo is a cast iron chair with a commemorative plaque dedicated to a young boy who died whilst saving his younger brother from drowning in 1891. It is not apparent when the chair was placed in the gazebo.

Identity/Sense of place/Continuity:

*Is the item a focus of community, regional, or national identity?
Does the item contribute to sense of place or continuity?*

The gazebo has been in continuous use by the Botanic Gardens for nearly 100 years and contributes to the sense of place and continuity of the Botanic Gardens Heritage Area. It has strong public recognition by virtue of its age, location alongside a main path, and for its intriguing appropriateness in their garden setting.

Sentiment/Connection: Is the item a focus of community sentiment and connection?

Level of cultural heritage significance

Rare: Is the item rare, unique, unusual, seminal, influential, or outstanding?

Representative: Is the item a good example of the class it represents?

This structure is a good representative of the Edwardian Carpenter Gothic style. It is an interesting record of a gazebo and gives an indication of the prominent styles and construction techniques that were popular during the period.

Authentic: Does the item have authenticity or integrity because it retains significant fabric from the time of its construction or from later periods when important additions or modifications were carried out?

The building appears to retain much of its original building fabric and remains in near-authentic condition.

Local/Regional/National/International

Is the item important for any of the above characteristics at a local, regional, national, or international level?

This building is important at a local level as it retains authenticity of materials, demonstrates excellent craftsmanship, and has had a long association with the Botanic Gardens.

4.0 Appendix

Research checklist (desktop)

Source	Y/N	Comments
1995 Heritage Inventory		
2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
WCC Records – building file		
WCC Records – grant files (earthquake strengthening, enhancement of heritage values)		
Research notes from 2001 Non-Residential heritage Inventory		
Plan change?		
Heritage Area Report		
Heritage Area Spreadsheet		
Heritage items folder (electronic)		
HPT website		
HPT files		
Conservation Plan		
Searched Heritage Library (CAB 2)		

Background research

Insert any relevant background information into this section. This may include:

- Additional plans, such as those for alterations
- Chunks of text from other sources such as *Cyclopedia of NZ, Papers Past*
- Additional images

Botanic Gardens Summerhouse (Gazebo).

Timeline.

September 1914-Built for the Labour Day procession by the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners following a request from the Wellington City Council to select **three members to work with council in preparing a trade exhibit.**

Reference:- 89-317-10/09: District Council (Wellington) Minute Book 1913-1915. District Council Meeting 25/09/1914.

October 26 1914-Gazebo is a part of the Labour Day procession. Display of a large summer house with a trellised roof and diagonal braced sides ornamented with diamond shaped shields. The Gazebo was made of heart of Totara, the best that can be got for the purpose, and was certainly well made and nicely designed.

Reference:- 'Labour Day', Evening Post, Monday Volume LXXXVIII, Issue 101, 26 October 1914, Page 2.

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgibin/paperspast?a=d&d=EP19141026.2.17&cl=CL2.1914.10.26&e=-----10--1----0-->

November 07 1914- Town Clerk writes to Mr. Blatherwick (Secretary of the Carpenters Union) stating: "I am directed by the Chairman of the Reserves Committee to inform you that he has consulted with the members of his committee regarding the gazebo used in the Labour Day Celebrations, and to offer you the sum of £15 for the purchase of the house. The Committee in making this offer, do not make any condition that the money shall be devoted to the Patriotic Fund.

November 11 1914- Town clerk writes to the Secretary, Carpenters' Union stating: "Sir, I have to confirm my telephone message to you of yesterday afternoon informing you that the council have agreed to purchase the Gazebo offered to them for the sum of £20, delivery to be given at the Botanical Gardens.