

**Maranui Surf Club**  
Lyllall Parade



Maranui Surf Life Saving Club (Photo: *Charles Collins, 2015*)

**Summary of heritage significance**

- The Maranui Surf Life Saving Club building an unusual vernacular/Modernist building that has evolved to meet the functional requirements of the surf life saving club. It is notable for its unusual rectilinear forms, tall parapets, and unusual arrangement of windows.
- The Maranui S.L.S.C. is one of the city's oldest sports clubs and one of the country's oldest surf clubhouses.
- The building is held in high esteem, mainly for the surf club and now café that occupy it. This can be seen in the strong public support for its rebuild following the fire that gutted the building in 2009.

District Plan:	Map 17, reference 179
Legal Description:	Pt Lot 3 DP 2456
Heritage Area:	No
HPT Listed:	No
Archaeological Site:	
Other Names:	
Key physical dates:	1930: Construction 1957: First floor added 1964: Boat shed added at north-east end of building
Architect / Builder:	Harold Claridge/City Engineer
Former uses:	Surf life saving club
Current uses:	Surf life saving club / cafe
Earthquake Prone Status:	Not Earthquake Prone (SR 209505)

Extent: Cityview GIS 2013



## 1.0 Outline History

### 1.1 History<sup>1</sup>

The beach at Lyall Bay was a popular attraction by the early 1900s and, in 1909, members of the Wellington Swimming Club began using it to practise surf rescues. After a series of spectacular rescues of swimmers on one February day in 1910<sup>2</sup> there was a public call for the formation of a lifesaving corps.

A new club was formed as a branch of the Wellington Swimming Club, but it became a separate entity in early 1911 as the Lyall Bay Surf and Lifesaving Club, the second such club in New Zealand and the first to patrol.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, its first clubhouse was washed away that same year, and a major dispute between members of the club led to the formation of the breakaway club of Maranui (the Maori name for area now called Lyall Bay) at a meeting held in the local Smith's Tearooms. The choice of name, described in 1911 as "sweet sounding ... that rolls easily off the tongue"<sup>4</sup>, was a conscious decision in recognition of the area's Maori past, which even then was largely forgotten. The new club was officially formed on 3 October 1911 with a total of 96 members. From having no surf lifesaving clubs the city now had two.

Maranui built its first clubhouse in 1911 with the help of the Wellington City Council, but the council soon made it clear that it wanted the two clubs to amalgamate. This nearly happened in 1919 but, within a decade, the subject had been dropped. After enough time elapsed, the rivalry between the two clubs moved onto the beach.

M.G. Templeton built Maranui's second clubhouse in 1930, just west of the old building.<sup>5</sup> A club member, Harold Claridge, drew up the original plans.<sup>6</sup> The building was one story with a section of flat roofing designed to allow for "scrutiny of the beach in case of accident."<sup>7</sup> Most of the interior was devoted to the clubroom, which faced Lyall Parade, while the section facing the sea housed a reading room and a committee room.<sup>8</sup> The ability to build the clubhouse, which largely relied upon the fundraising ability of members and the generosity of the city council, was seen as a milestone at the time<sup>9</sup> – it was a demonstration of success, and confidence in the club's future. The building was officially opened on 6 December 1930, marked by the presence of an orchestra.<sup>10</sup>

During World War II the building was appropriated for army use and surf lifesaving activities were greatly reduced by the absence of members on overseas service. The Lyall Bay club allowed Maranui members to use their facilities during this period.<sup>11</sup> The clubhouse was returned in 1943.

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<sup>1</sup> This repeats: Russell Murray, 'Maranui Surf Life Saving Club, Lyall Bay Parade, VIII' (Wellington City Council: Unpublished report, prepared for Plan Change 53, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Lyall Bay Surf Life Saving Club, *The First Patrol: a history of the Lyall Bay Surf and Life Saving Club 1910-1985* (1985), p.6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p10.

<sup>4</sup> 83-827-01/13: : Maranui Surf Life Saving Club Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library.

<sup>5</sup> C.R Mentiplay, *Maranui: the story of a surf club* (Maranui Surf Life Saving Club, Wellington, 1961), p.26.

<sup>6</sup> Newspaper article in Wellington Scrapbook 24 Wellington Public Library. This is not referenced.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Building Permit 00056:111:B10101, 1930. Wellington City Archives (WCA).

<sup>9</sup> 83-287-01/04, ATL.

<sup>10</sup> 83-287-01/04, ATL.

<sup>11</sup> Mentiplay, p.39.

The club had trouble receiving the expected compensation from the army, and it transpired the council had given the army use of the building gratis without consulting the club.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, the army paid up to the tune of £112, which worked out at £2 per week.

With the end of the war and return of the clubhouse, plans were made to extend the building, but the cost involved delayed this. The plans were revived in 1953, when, with membership at 253<sup>13</sup>, the club began fundraising. Various events were held, including a 'social and smoke evening'.<sup>14</sup> The additions were required to house the growing number of young members. By this period the club appears to have become something of a 'social worker', with "...part of our work ... designed to keep young chaps off the street and try and make useful citizens out of them."<sup>15</sup> This became a useful point to raise when soliciting funds, and appears to have been successful, given the amount of donations, some albeit modest, given by members of the public and businesses.<sup>16</sup>

The second storey extension designed by the City Engineer, which largely accounts for the present appearance of the building, was completed early in 1956.<sup>17</sup> According to one account, the building was acclaimed as "one of the finest clubhouses in the country".<sup>18</sup> There was a flurry of construction at Lyall Bay at that time, with new premises built for the Lyall Bay club and for the Wellington Ladies Surf and Lifesaving Club (later amalgamated with Lyall Bay) at the same time. In 1964 a boatshed was added to the north-east side of the building, which altered the shape of the building, particularly from the sea-side.<sup>19</sup> This work established the configuration of building as it appears today. Recently, the first storey has been altered to accommodate café facilities and is now open plan; the café has proved very popular and has enlivened this end of the beach.

Although Lyall Bay is not an especially dangerous beach, club members have made a number of rescues there since 1911. The club has won a great number of national surf lifesaving titles and had numerous Wellington and New Zealand representatives. It is also prominent in water polo. The beach remains popular with swimmers and surfers, particularly (though not exclusively) in the summer months.

## 1.2 Timeline of modifications

- 1930 Maranui Surf Life Saving Club constructed
- 1956 A second storey is added to the club, designed and at least partially funded by the Council.
- 1964 A single storey boatshed is added to the northeast side of the building

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<sup>12</sup> 83-287-01/05, ATL.

<sup>13</sup> Mentiplay, pp.48-49.

<sup>14</sup> -287-01/06, ATL. Similar letters were sent to various businesses.

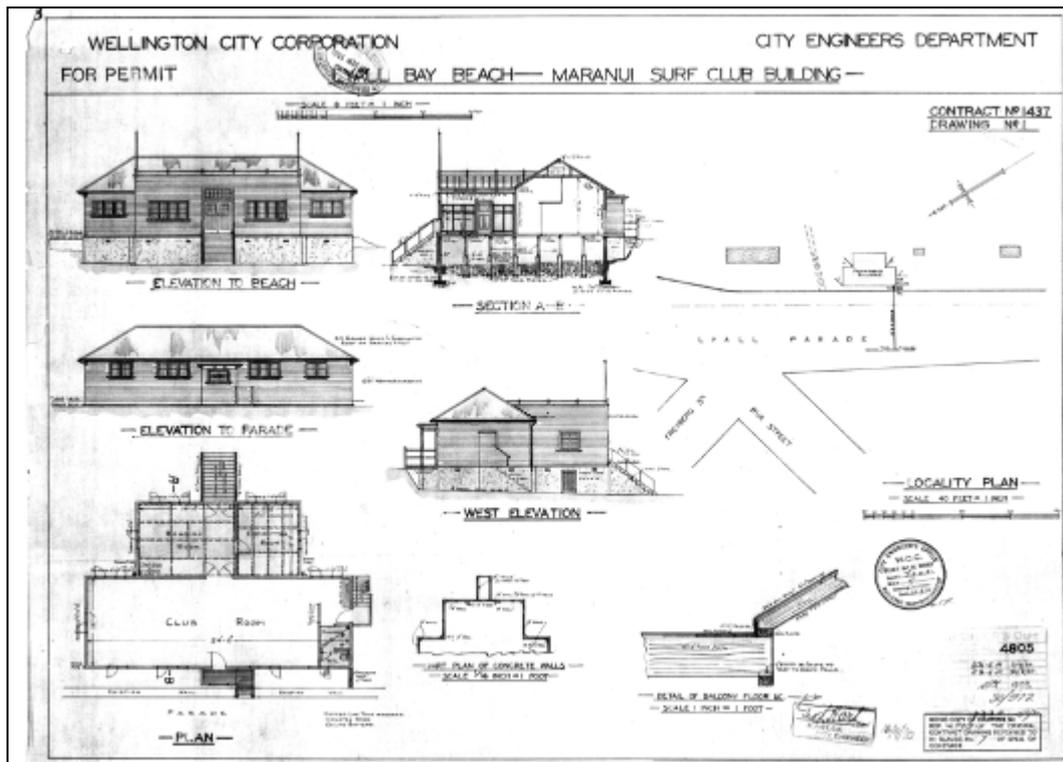
<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> 83-287-01/07, ATL.

<sup>17</sup> Building Permit 00056:532:B39424, 1956. WCA.

<sup>18</sup> Mentiplay, p.51.

<sup>19</sup> Building Permit 00058:345:14809, 1964. WCA.



Plans WCC Archive file 00056:111:B1010

### 1.3 Occupation history

Not fully assessed

1930-present Maranui Surf Life Saving Club

2004-present Maranui Café

### 1.4 Architect

Harold Claridge/City Engineer

## 2.0 Physical description

### 2.1 Architecture

The Maranui Surf Lifesaving Clubrooms were built in three distinct stages. The original drawings, dated September 1930 and prepared by the WCC City Engineers Department, show a single storey building. The building was built from timber framing, clad in ship-lap weatherboards, and set on substantial concrete foundations. A large clubroom filled most of the space, with a reading room and committee room on the seaward side with a flight of steps down onto the beach. These rooms had a flat roof covered in malthoid, used as a lookout with ladder access, while the clubroom portion had a hipped roof in galvanised iron.

In 1956 a whole first floor was added, serviced by a stairwell on the Lyall Bay Parade side with the two tall narrow windows that exist today, and a bay window on the seaward side.

A single-storey extension at the north-east end of the building was built in 1964. This was a boatshed and had a large roll-up door on the seaward side. These additions were sheathed in the same narrow ship-lap weatherboards of the addition.

Although the building was built in three distinct phases, and once had a pitched roof and overhanging eaves, it is now has a cubic Modernist aesthetic. The building is arranged as a group of rectilinear 'boxes' with tall parapets, and these are pierced by a somewhat random pattern of fenestration – some rectangular, some arranged in horizontal bands, some vertical. The effect is augmented by the 'retro' signage, and a cantilevered entrance canopy.

## **2.2 Materials**

Timber

## **2.3 Setting**

The Maranui Surf Life Saving Club building is a local landmark in the sweep of Lyall Bay. This status is somewhat heightened by its occupation by a popular café that "captures the look and feel of friendly beachside cafes and family holidays of a bygone era."<sup>20</sup>

It is one of a row of four small timber buildings that are located on the beach in front of the sea-wall. The building to the immediate east of the Maranui building is a pleasant single-storey (with basement) bungalow-inspired building with wide verandahs and splayed footing details, the next two eastern-most buildings are simple sheds designed on a domestic scale with pitched roofs, and regular windows (much like the original c.1930 drawings of this building). All four buildings share a white weatherboard/timber windows and doors – but the Maranui building stands out for its unusual cubic form, tall parapets, and wilful array of windows.

The wider context is the open setting between road and sea, with its landward edge captured by the prominent sea-wall (WCC object ref 4 &5/ 33) that encompasses the length of the beach and its seaward edge anchored in the beach. Lyall Bay Parade is a wide tree-less (and often windswept) road that runs along the waterfront to the airport. The area is surrounded by the wide sweeping arms of hills that are dotted by suburban houses, and by the houses and industrial zone which line the northern side of the parade.

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<sup>20</sup> 'Maranui Café,' Menus website accessed March 2014 <http://www.menus.co.nz/listing/s60v/maranui-cafe/>

## Sources

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### 3.0 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 Maranui Surf Life Saving Club building an unusual vernacular/Modernist building that has evolved to meet the functional requirements of the surf life saving club. It is notable for its unusual rectilinear forms, tall parapets, and unusual arrangement of windows.

**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?*

Maranui SLSC has townscape value as a local landmark for its unusual architectural style, its beach setting, and for its use as popular café.

**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 building is one of a row of four small timber weatherboard buildings on the Lyall Bay beach. It has a historic association with the nearby Lyall Bay Surf and Lifesaving Club.

##### **Historic Value:**

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

Maranui is also one of the city's longest operating sporting clubs. The earliest part of its clubhouse, dating from 1930, is one of the oldest surf club-houses in New Zealand.

**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?*

**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 building is held in high esteem, mainly for the surf club and now café that occupy it. This can be seen in the strong public support for its rebuild following the fire that gutted the building in 2009.

***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?

***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 building makes a significant contribution to a sense of continuity, having housed the Maranui Surf Life Saving Club since 1930.

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

The Maranui Surf Life Saving Club Building has a historic association with a popular surf life saving club, and with a similarly popular café. It is likely to be the focus of some 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?

***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 has evolved over time to meet the changing needs of the surf life saving club. It was damaged by a fire in 2009 and much of the interior was destroyed.

**Local/Regional/National/International**

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

The building is important on a local level.

## 4.0 Appendix

### Research checklist (desktop)

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

### 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*