
HOW COULD NEW ZEALANDERS BUILD RESOURCES FOR THE ON-GOING CARE OF THEIR HERITAGE HOUSING?

Christina Mackay

1. Victoria University of Wellington

In New Zealand, Victorian and Edwardian villas, built around the turn of the 20th Century, have come of age. The classically referenced designs were crafted from the heart of native trees and have endured over a century of life. Their timber framed structures have been resilient to earthquake forces. The property values of inner suburbs have ensured they were retained, their decorative exteriors protected by layers of paint. The interiors are less intact, ravished by changing occupation and fashions. Recent surveys have found that attempts at restoration were thwarted by the lack of design and technical resources. Common renovations, to increase day-lighting, open-plan kitchens to dining and to connect living spaces to the exterior were foreign concepts to the villa typology. Results were sometimes sympathetic but more often destructive. A survey of heritage advisers, architects and tradespersons found an urgent need for guidelines. This paper sets out a blueprint for researching and disseminating resources for the restoration and renovation of heritage housing in New Zealand. It considers the mandate and responsibilities of public sector organizations – Heritage New Zealand, Department of Building & Housing, local governments, and the Building Research Authority of New Zealand (BRANZ). It proposes facilitating information sharing between designers, building contractors and craftspeople to build national capability and cultural pride in regenerating heritage housing. It identifies research questions and proposes collaborations between universities and stakeholders to fund and undertake the investigative and design research.

Christina Mackay – Christina.Mackay@vuw.ac.nz