



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero – Report for a Historic Place **Hundertwasser Public Toilets, KAWAKAWA (List No. 9867, Category 1)**



Hundertwasser Public Toilets, Kawakawa (Bill Edwards, HNZPT, 26 February 2023).

Bill Edwards
Last amended 14 April 2023
Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

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Disclaimer

Please note that entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero identifies only the heritage values of the property concerned, and should not be construed as advice on the state of the property, or as a comment of its soundness or safety, including in regard to earthquake risk, safety in the event of fire, or insanitary conditions.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence to support the inclusion of Hundertwasser Public Toilets in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rāangi Kōrero as a Category 1 historic place.

Summary

Kawakawa is situated in the rohe of Ngāti Hine. The rohe of Ngāti Hine is composed of hilly terrain, fertile valleys and large tracts of swampland. The main river is Te Awa Tapu o Taumerere and numerous creeks and swamps criss-cross the landscape. Into this landscape of swamp and hills settled the descendants of Hineāmaru, the ancestor of Ngāti Hine iwi.¹

In 1859 Maihi Paraone Kawiti (son of Ngāpuhi rangatira Te Ruki Kawiti) had asked the Governor (Gore Brown) to have the Kawakawa area settled by Pākehā and a town established.² The Governor replied that he was pleased that Māori had agreed to sell the land around Kawakawa but favoured Kerikeri as the site of a town in the Bay of Islands.³ However, this decision was changed when coal was discovered in Kawakawa in the early 1860's.

The Hundertwasser Public Toilets were created in 1999 and they are in the centre of town on the North Island main arterial route, State Highway 1, through Kawakawa. The building is nationally and internationally significant. This is the only public building to a Hundertwasser design in New Zealand which the architect/artist had direct involvement with its creation. Hundertwasser has an international reputation as an architect, and has buildings in Europe, North America, Japan, and New Zealand. The buildings share common architectural features with the use of what he called tree tenants, spontaneous vegetation, uneven floors. His buildings testify to his commitment to diversity instead of monotony, for unregulated irregularities for living in harmony with nature, for beauty and for joy.

The public toilets started as a utilitarian concrete block structure built in 1969. The Kawakawa business community approached Hundertwasser (known locally as Fredrick) to have a building designed by the artist which would have a positive economic and artistic impact upon the town. It would make Kawakawa a destination, rather than a thoroughfare to places further north. The transformation of the

¹ Te Runanga o Ngati Hine Submission on the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Bill to the Maori Affairs Committee, URL: <http://www.parliament.nz/resource/0000133904>; [Accessed 15 Apr 2016]

² Letter from Maihi Paraone Kawiti to Governor Gore Brown 3 February 1859 – copy in Kawakawa Museum collection.

³ Letters to Maihi Paraone Kawiti from Governor's Gore Brown Office 14 June 1859 and June 20 1859- copies in Kawakawa Museum collection.

building into something of beauty and a designed building which was in harmony with nature personally appealed to him as well as contributing to the community in which he now lived.

Renovation of the building was partly a community effort. The head builder and contractor were Mike Brouwers with assistance from Richard Smart and Doug Shepherd with contributions by Peter Yeates and Mike Woodman. The local Bay of Islands College students prepared the ceramic tiles, the bricks were from a former Bank of New Zealand building, recycled bottles were used, and the construction was completed by community volunteers.⁴

The building is covered with solid plaster that is flowing in its form, recycled glass bottles are used in the building to allow light but at the same time provide privacy. The effect of the exterior building is flowing, colourful and playful it is human-centric. The roof is a living roof which includes flax's, native grasses and its tree tenants. There are light and ventilation ducts on the roof that are glass with large golden balls encasing the vents. The roof has in profile two gentle curves with the centre of the roofs demarcating the male and female toilets.

The interior of the building is a riot of colour, undulating surfaces, curves while still functioning as a public toilet. The floors are a mix large and small coloured tiles which are irregular in size and floor is not flat but undulating. The walls are also not perpendicular but tiled and curve in a slight sinuous curve. Light comes into the building through the coloured bottle glass windows.

Colourful columns extend a veranda over the public footpath at the front of the building. There is a cobbled walkway which enters the building made from recycled bricks. There are also artworks of engraved clay tablets which show the outlines of trees and leaves in the walkway.

The building has not changed on form since it was constructed and remains in its original state as imagined by the visionary artist/architect. The building is a manifestation of the philosophy that the building should be a peace accord with nature. This is articulated by using recycled materials and the use of a living roof. It also expresses the vision that harmony with beauty and harmony with nature makes us really feel good; it brings joy. It is a joyful building to be in and explore. It is unique in New Zealand as it is only public building that Hundertwasser was directly involved with.

⁴ Rhonda Albom, 'Hundertwasser Toilets: One of Three New Zealand Hundertwasser Designs', last updated 20 June 2022, URL: <https://www.albomadventures.com/hundertwasser-toilets/> [Accessed 22 Feb 2023].

1. IDENTIFICATION⁵

1.1. Name of Place

Name

Hundertwasser Public Toilets

Other Names

Hundertwasser Dunny

Kawakawa Public Toilets

1.2. Location Information

Address

60 Gilles Street

KAWAKAWA

Additional Location Information

Local Authority

Far North District Council

1.3. Legal Description

Lot 1 DP 46977 (RT NA35B/1242) and Legal Road, North Auckland Land District

1.4. Extent of List Entry

Extent includes the land described as Lot 1 DP 46977 (RT NA35B/1242) and Legal Road, North Auckland Land District and the building known as Hundertwasser Public Toilets thereon.

Extent includes the attached verandah canopy and posts and associated cobblestone paving. (Refer to map in Appendix 1 of the List entry report for further information).

1.5. Eligibility

⁵ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

There is sufficient information included in this report to identify this place. This place is physically eligible for consideration as a historic place. It consists of land and a building fixed to land which lies within the territorial limits of New Zealand.

1.6. Existing Heritage Recognition

Local Authority and Regional Authority Plan Scheduling

Not scheduled in Far North District Plan, Operative 27 August 2009

Other Heritage Recognition

The Hundertwasser Non-Profit Foundation, Vienna.

Premier Creative Places Award at the local Government New Zealand Annual conference – July 10 2000.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1. Historical Information

Early History of Kawakawa

Kawakawa is situated in the rohe of Ngāti Hine. The rohe of Ngāti Hine is composed of hilly terrain, fertile valleys and large tracts of swampland. The main river is Te Awa Tapu o Taumerere and numerous creeks and swamps criss-cross the landscape. Into this landscape of swamp and hills settled the descendants of Hineāmaru, the ancestor of Ngāti Hine iwi.⁶

Kawakawa is at confluence of the Waiōmio and Waiharakeke streams. There are many archaeological sites situated downstream of Kawakawa that are associated with Māori settlement of the area; these include pā, gardens, terraces and middens.⁷

In 1859 Maihi Paraone Kawiti (son of Ngāpuhi rangatira Te Ruki Kawiti) had asked the Governor (Gore Brown) to have the Kawakawa area settled by Pākehā and a town established.⁸ The Governor replied that he was pleased that Māori had agreed to sell the land around Kawakawa but favoured Kerikeri as the site of a town in the Bay of Islands.⁹

⁶ Te Runanga o Ngati Hine Submission on the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Bill to the Maori Affairs Committee, URL: <http://www.parliament.nz/resource/0000133904>; [Accessed 15 Apr 2016]

⁷ NZAA Archsite database, URL: [www \[archsite.eaglegis.co.nz/NZAA\]\(http://www.archsite.eaglegis.co.nz/NZAA\)](http://www.archsite.eaglegis.co.nz/NZAA), [Accessed 2 Dec 2022].

⁸ Letter from Maihi Paraone Kawiti to Governor Gore Brown 3 February 1859 – copy in Kawakawa Museum collection.

⁹ Letters to Maihi Paraone Kawiti from Governor's Gore Brown Office 14 June 1859 and June 20 1859- copies in Kawakawa

However, this decision was changed when coal was discovered in Kawakawa in 1861. When the specimens of coal were sent to Auckland for tests it revealed that the coal was of the best quality and excellent for both steam and gas making. The District Land Commissioner Henry Tacy Kemp negotiated the purchase of 24,000 acres of land around Kawakawa from its Māori owners. The town of Kawakawa was built around coal and the first railway in the North Island was constructed in 1868 to carry coal to the nearby Taumarere Wharf and Landing on the Kawakawa River.¹⁰ Commercial mining for coal stopped at the beginning of the 20th century due to repeated flooding of the coal mines and farming and tourism became the principal economic activity of the area.¹¹

Kawakawa Public Toilet Site

The toilets are situated on the main street of Kawakawa which is State Highway 1 and has a railway line running centrally through the Highway. Both sides of the Main Street are lined with shops and the toilets are placed centrally in the town. A title for part of Te Wharau Block, known as Lot 2 DP 21503, was issued to William Stewart, an agent from Auckland, and Augustus Hall, Kawakawa butcher, in 1929 before being sold to Robert Reyland, Kawakawa bootmaker, the same year.¹²

By 1951 the property had been transferred to Ernest David Taylor, Kawakawa garage proprietor who undertook a subdivision which created Lot 1 DP 46977 in 1959.¹³ In 1961 the land was an undeveloped parcel with large industrial buildings to the north and east.¹⁴ The land then came under Public ownership when Lot 1 was acquired by the Chairman Councillors and Citizens of the Town District of Kawakawa in 1969.¹⁵ By 1975 a small public toilet building with men's and women's conveniences had been constructed on the site.¹⁶ The structure was set back from the road with a small garden at the front.

Museum collection.

¹⁰ Jack Lee notes on the Kawakawa Railway copy in Kawakawa Museum collection.

¹¹ Claudia Orange, 'Northland places - The Waiōmio valley', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, URL: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/northland-places/page-9> [Accessed 2 Dec 2022]

¹² RT NA600/170, DP 21053, LINZ.

¹³ RTs NA603/233, NA1813/53; DP 46977, LINZ.

¹⁴ Retrolens, SN1417, Run Number: P, Photo Number: 3, 3 Oct 1961, Sourced from <http://retrolens.nz> and licensed by LINZ. CC-BY 3.0.

¹⁵ RTs NA17B/1175, NA35B/1242, LINZ.

¹⁶ Retrolens, SN2786, Run Number: A, Photo Number: 2, 5 Jan 1975, Sourced from <http://retrolens.nz> and licensed by LINZ.

Prior to the 1960s public toilets were generally built 'out of sight or hidden amongst shrubberies' but concerns about safety and the difficulty of locating these hidden facilities led to a change in public attitudes and from this period new facilities were constructed in highly visible locations which was reflected in the placement of the new toilets on the main street of the small township.¹⁷ There was an active movement by the Community Board not only to improve the buildings but also to have a building that would have a positive impact upon the economy of the small town.¹⁸

Friedensreich Hundertwasser (15 December 1928- 19 February 2000)

Friedensreich Regentag Dunklebunt Hundertwasser, born Friedrich Stowasser, is internationally recognised for his art, architecture, writing and environmental protection. He was born in Vienna to a Catholic Father and a Jewish Mother which was extremely difficult during the Nazi Regime. To avoid persecution, they posed as Christians and Friedrich joined the Hitler Youth to cement the deception.

After the Second World War he trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and his artistic career ascended from his beginnings as a hunger artist (Hungerkünstler) in the circle of the avant garde in Paris in the 1950s to the international art world. Milestones in his ascent included the 5th Sao Paulo Art Biennial, Brazil 1959; the Venice Biennale 1962; and the Documenta III in Kassel, Germany 1964; his solo exhibition at the Toyoko Gallery 1961; major museum retrospectives such as one at the Kestner Gesellschaft in Hanover Germany 1964 and numerous other exhibitions in art institutions in Europe and the United States.¹⁹

Architecture should elevate and not subdue man. It is good to walk on uneven floors and regain our human balance. The straight line leads to the downfall of our civilisation.²⁰

¹⁷ Alison Breese, 'How convenient are our Conveniences? The demise of the underground facilities in Dunedin 1910-1980s', Otago, 2019, p. 7. URL: <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/conveniences/index> [accessed 26 Feb 2023]

¹⁸ Andreas J. Hirsh, Hundertwasser in New Zealand, Auckland, 2022, p. 160.

¹⁹ Hirsh, 2022, pp. 15-16.

²⁰ <https://hundertwasser.com/en>

This philosophy would influence the creation of the Public Toilets in Kawakawa in the southern hemisphere many years later.

In 1967 Hundertwasser purchased the old salt freighter *San Giuseppe T* built in 1910. Over the next 7 years Hundertwasser not only got his Captain license but was also extended, remodelled, and the ship was renamed the *Regentag*. These extensive changes became his architectural apprenticeship and working within the curves and shapes of a wooden ship reinforced his affinity with the nonlinear built environment.

In Hundertwasser's architecture the floors roll and buckle to imitate the swell of the earth, trees grow in or out of the buildings, and most surfaces are decorated with mosaics or recycled glass. Hundertwasser buildings make statements against conventional architecture that separates the built and natural environment.²¹ This was in direct contrast to the earlier modernist movement which is perhaps best summed up by Adolf Loos a pioneer of modernist architecture (1870-1933) who proclaimed that ornamentation on buildings was a crime. Hundertwasser believed that buildings should make you happy, be beautiful, work with nature and inspire the people that live in them. He railed against uniformity and believed that architecture could provide aesthetic solutions to social problems and called the uniform buildings "slave cages."²²

Hundertwasser began working as an architect at the age of 55 and he treated buildings by decorating them to be in harmony with nature. He had an international career spanned multiple countries with works being created in Austria, Israel, Spain, Netherlands, United States, Switzerland, Japan and New Zealand.²³

The international artist was invited to New Zealand in 1973 for an exhibition of his work at the Auckland Art Gallery entitled *Paintings and Graphics by Hundertwasser*. He stayed in New Zealand after the opening, and after buying a Morris Mini explored and travelled New Zealand meeting local people, swimming in the sea as much as possible. His first stay had lasted 148 days, and he was enthralled with the people and the country.

²¹ Simone Wallk, 'Friedrich Hundertwasser: "I Give Houses Back to the People"', in 'The Nassau Literary Review', 26 Oct 2018, URL: <https://www.nasslit.com/home/2018/10/26/friedrich-hundertwasser-i-give-houses-back-to-the-people> [Accessed 7 Dec 2022].

²² Simone Wallk, 'Friedrich Hundertwasser: "I Give Houses Back to the People"', in 'The Nassau Literary Review', 26 Oct 2018, URL: <https://www.nasslit.com/home/2018/10/26/friedrich-hundertwasser-i-give-houses-back-to-the-people> [Accessed 7 Dec 2022].

²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_buildings_by_Friedensreich_Hundertwasser. [Accessed 19 Dec 2022]

In 1974, on his second visit to the country, he produced a poster for Conservation Week/ Te Wiki Taiki Ao Turoa which won the competition. Hundertwasser visited again in that year continued to travel around New Zealand and was gaining a more realistic appraisal of the country and commented on erosion, deforestation, lack of architectural beauty in new homes, and commercially driven farming.²⁴

Hundertwasser brought a 200-ha property in the Kaurinui Valley near to Kawakawa and used the farm to expand his ethos that *we must restore to nature territories which man has illegally occupied*. During his lifetime it was reforested with over 150,000 trees planted. He worked closely with his neighbours and the community to realise his vision of a place in a peace treaty with nature.²⁵ Hundertwasser also established links with the Kawakawa community through his efforts to preserve the historic Post Office (which was demolished) and his involvement with the Bay of Islands Vintage Railway.

In 1983 Hundertwasser designed a new New Zealand flag which was based on the koru fern which combined Hundertwasser recurring artistic motif of the spiral with “that combines New Zealand’s age-old heritage of nature and the heritage of Māori history with the growing future of a new nation”.²⁶

Modifying Kawakawa Public Toilets

The Kawakawa business community approached Hundertwasser in 1998 (known locally as Fredrick) to have a building designed by the artist which would have a positive economic and artistic impact upon the town. It would make Kawakawa a destination, rather than a thoroughfare to places further north.

The public toilet block which was a 1969 utilitarian structure was to get redesigned by Hundertwasser and incorporate many of his design features. The original building had little aesthetic merit being a concrete block structure. The transformation of the building into something of beauty and a designed building which was in harmony with nature personally appealed to him as well as contributing to the community in which he now lived. The building belonged to the Far North District Council and so they managed the project.

²⁴ Hirsh, 2022, pp. 63-64.

²⁵ Hirsh, 2022 , p. 133.

²⁶ Hirsh, 2022, p. 133.

To explain the vision to the community, Hundertwasser and his collaborator Richard Smart, who managed the Hundertwasser property, and was also involved with architecture, sculpture, and painting, created a 1:20 model which became the basis of the revamped Kawakawa toilets.

Renovation of the building was partly a community effort and the work was commenced in 1999. The head builder and contractor were Mike Brouwers with assistance from Richard Smart and Doug Shepherd with contributions by Peter Yeates and Mike Woodman. The local Bay of Islands College students prepared the ceramic tiles, the bricks were from a former Bank of New Zealand building, recycled bottles were used, and the construction was completed by community volunteers.²⁷ The project was managed by the Far North District Council, and the project leader was Sue Hodge. In an interview with Ms Hodge, she expressed her ongoing fear of costs for the project as Hundertwasser would make changes if aspects of the project did not fit his artistic vision. If he was not happy with aspects of the building it would be pulled down and started again.²⁸ But he would pay for those changes so his artistic integrity would be preserved.

Reimagined Toilets

Hundertwasser's philosophy was to modify rather than tear down modern buildings. He approached functionalist buildings with improvements that would reduce their environmental impact and beautify their appearance.

This is what happened to the utilitarian Kawakawa concrete block public toilet. Hundertwasser approached the building as an architectural doctor curing the ailments of unsustainable, uniform structures.

At his farm in Kaurinui in 1976 he had produced a bottle house with help from Graeme Butler and neighbours the Fagan and Shepherd families. Recycled bottles are also used in the back of the Kawakawa Public Toilet which emit light but, because of the selection of coloured bottles, also provide privacy.

²⁷ Rhonda Albom, 'Hundertwasser Toilets: One of Three New Zealand Hundertwasser Designs', last updated 20 June 2022, URL: <https://www.albomadventures.com/hundertwasser-toilets/> [Accessed 22 Feb 2023].

²⁸ Pers. Comm., Sue Hodge to Bill Edwards by phone, Jan 2023.

Another of the design elements that Hundertwasser employed in his buildings was the use of a living roof. Artist and ceramicist Peter Yeates who had helped with the *Rentag* contributed a roof element. Hundertwasser selected and planted two trees on the roof - “the tree tenant pays rent in a more valuable currency than a human tenant” - through supplying oxygen, regulating climate, absorbing sound, “dispensing beauty,” acting as curtains, hosting butterflies and birds, and improving the mood. All of this, to Hundertwasser, is “a symbol of reparation towards nature” through the integration of natural and inhabited environments.²⁹ The trees selected were a Plane tree for the Front (southern end) of the building and a Tulip tree for the (northern) rear end.

Bright colours and non-uniformity are design elements in Hundertwasser buildings, and these were employed at Kawakawa. There is a playful golden orb on the roof, recycled bricks from the dismantled Kawakawa BNZ Bank and donated bottles are used at the entrance and elsewhere in the building. The columns at the front of the building were created by Hundertwasser by assembling brightly coloured Asian ceramics. The students of the Bay of Islands College in consultation with the architect/artist prepared ceramic tiles that were used throughout the building.

The floor of the building is cobblestone and, true to his philosophy that it is important to walk on an uneven surface, the cobbles are laid in an undulating form on an uneven surface.

The building is quirky, colourful, undulating, and playful. The wakamanawa (blessing) was performed by Ngati Hine kaumatua Kevin Prime. Noma Shepherd, his neighbour, read his message at the opening of the building which sums up the artistic and architectural vision of Hundertwasser.

“That even small things can bring beauty into our life.... It is harmony with beauty and harmony with nature, which makes us feel good. Beauty has an important function. Beauty is always underestimated.”³⁰

This is the only example by Hundertwasser design on a public building in Aotearoa New Zealand during his lifetime that he actively contributed to.

²⁹ Simone Wallk, ‘Friedrich Hundertwasser: “I Give Houses Back to the People”’, in ‘The Nassau Literary Review’, 26 Oct 2018, URL: <https://www.nasslit.com/home/2018/10/26/friedrich-hundertwasser-i-give-houses-back-to-the-people> [Accessed 7 Dec 2022]

³⁰ Hundertwasser’s opening address for Kawakawa Public toilets, 8 December 1999. Hundertwasser Archive Vienna.

On July 10, 2000, the Hundertwasser Public Toilets were awarded the Premier Creative Places Award at the local Government New Zealand Annual conference.³¹ One year after the opening of the building Friedensreich Hundertwasser died and was buried in his garden – in his garden of the Happy Dead – under a Tulip tree. The legacy of Hundertwasser in Kawakawa continues with the Hundertwasser Park opening in 2020 but more importantly the Main street has adopted many of his design motifs. The toilets have had a positive economic and artistic impact upon the town and are now internationally recognised as a tourist attraction as the Kawakawa community hoped they would become. It has been estimated that they attract 1 million visits per year.

2.2. Physical Information

Current Description

Context

Hundertwasser Public Toilets are located on the North Island main arterial route, State Highway 1, through Kawakawa, which is now used by the Bay of Islands Vintage Railway Trust. Located at the eastern end of the main shopping street in the town, the place is prominently located facing a pedestrian crossing leading directly to the structure. Hundertwasser Park is located immediately behind the place with a paved walkway providing access from the park to the toilets. The town is a small Northland town but because of the economic benefits associated with the visits to the public toilets many design elements of Hundertwasser have been incorporated into buildings in the town which produces a homage to the architect.

³¹ https://hundertwasser.com/en/architecture/arch119_oeffentliche_toilette_kawakawa_1554



Figure 1 Main Street, Kawakawa. (Bill Edwards, HNZPT, 26 February 2023)

Site

The site is rectangular in plan and incorporates the main toilets building, a small area of open space at the rear and part of a public footpath at the front which incorporates the front canopy and its supporting posts. The paved open space at the rear includes an oak tree. The footpath in front of the toilet building is paved with the same cobblestones as the main floor and extends to the edge of the road.



Figure 2 Tourists gather on a rainy day to use and photograph the Hundertwasser Public Toilets Kawakawa (Bill Edwards, HNZPT, 26 February 2023)

Exterior

The roof is a living roof which includes flax's, native grasses and its tree tenants.

Unfortunately, the tulip tree was cut down by a maintenance contractor who did not understand the significance of the tree. There are light and ventilation ducts on the roof that are glass with large golden balls encasing the vents. The roof has in profile two gentle curves with the centre of the roofs demarcating the male and female toilets.

Colourful columns extend a veranda over the public footpath at the front of the building.

There is a cobbled walkway which enters the building made from recycled bricks. There are also artworks of engraved clay tablets which show the outlines of trees and leaves in the walkway.

The building is covered with solid plaster that is flowing in its form, recycled glass bottles are used in the building to allow light but at the same time provide privacy. The effect of the exterior building is flowing, colourful and playful it is human-centric.



Figure 3 Rear of the Hundertwasser toilets (Bill Edwards, HNZPT, 26 February 2023)

Interior

The interior of the building is a riot of colour, undulating surfaces, curves while still functioning as a public toilet. The floors are a mix large and small coloured tiles which are irregular in size and floor is not flat but undulating. In the male toilet the Hundertwasser flag motif in green and white tiles greets the user. The walls are also not perpendicular but tiled

and curve in a slight sinuous curve. Light comes into the building through the coloured bottle glass windows.

The hardware of the toilets is standardised. The pans, sinks and urinals are made of white porcelain and stainless steel; the toilet pans have wooden seats. The ceilings have exposed wooden beams and the walls above the tiles are plastered. There is a metal gate to close the toilets off which is patterned with botanical motifs. The effect of the interior is to enter an eccentric and magical world.

Comparisons



Figure 4 Undulating walls, koru flag design and use of irregular coloured and sizes tiles all Hundertwasser design motifs male toilet (Bill Edwards, HNZPT, 26 February 2023)

There are several public toilets of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga List. These include the “Taj Mahal” Public Toilets in Central Wellington List No.1434 Category 2 they have been given that name because of the distinctive domes at each end. The Edwardian Bus Shelter and Toilet adjacent to Grafton Bridge List No. 561 Category 2 built in 1910 is an ornate Edwardian building. The Women’s Rest Room in Napier List No.1180 Category 1 is a highly unusual utilitarian First World War memorial designed to benefit women as well as one of the few buildings to survive the Napier earthquake. Public toilets have been designed to be functional and hygienic but there are no listed toilets that has been created as artworks.

Hundertwasser created many public art pieces and designed multiple buildings during his career. Of these designs three public buildings in New Zealand have been completed and

Hundertwasser Public Toilets is the only one of these to have been completed during his lifetime. Two further designs have been completed posthumously the Te Hononga Hundertwasser Memorial Park Kawakawa opened in October 2020 and Hundertwasser Art Centre, Whangarei which, although initially conceived of in 1993 was finally built and opened in 2022.

Construction Professionals

Friedensreich Regentag Dunklebunt Hundertwasser - Architect/Artist

Mike Brouwers – builder

Richard Smart- model maker/ designer/ artist

Peter Yeates- ceramicist

Sue Hodge- project manager

Doug Shepherd -community catalyst

Mike Woodman- community

The Kawakawa community

Bay of Islands College

Construction Materials

Grass roof incorporating two trees.

Cobblestone flooring

Bottle glass windows

Mosaic tiling

Ceramic tiles

Recycled bricks

Copper handiwork

Key Physical Dates

c1969 Original Construction – Kawakawa Public Toilets

1999 Modification – Hundertwasser design

 Addition – Front verandah canopy, posts, living roof

Uses

Civic Facilities Public Lavatory

Civic Facilities Statue/public art

2.3. Chattels

There are no chattels included in this List entry.

2.4. Sources

Sources Available and Accessed

Various internet sources and phone interviews with Richard Smart and Sue Hodge.

https://hundertwasser.com/en/architecture/arch119_oeffentliche_toilette_kawakawa_1554

https://www.hundertwasser.at/english/oeuvre/arch/arch_kawakawa.php

[https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/wp-](https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/hundertwasser_toilet_in_kawakawa.jpg)

[content/uploads/2022/08/hundertwasser toilet in kawakawa.jpg](https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/hundertwasser_toilet_in_kawakawa.jpg)

<https://places.nz/places/far-north/kawakawa/hundertwasser-toilets-3206>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/308184/cavity-closes-kawakawa's-famous-loo>

https://issuu.com/nzplumber/docs/nz_plumber_april-may2020_issu2/s/10485130

[https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10304312.2013.854864?scroll=top&needAccess](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10304312.2013.854864?scroll=top&needAccess=true)<https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/7818/a-view-from-the-loo>

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/7818/a-view-from-the-loo>

<https://www.nasslit.com/home/2018/10/26/friedrich-hundertwasser-i-give-houses-back-to-the-people>

Further Reading

Hirsh, A.J., Hundertwasser in New Zealand, Auckland, 2022.

3. SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT³²

3.1. Section 66 (1) Assessment

This place has been assessed for, and found to possess aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical and social significance or value. It is considered that this place qualifies as part of New Zealand's historic and cultural heritage.

Aesthetic Significance or Value

The building is designed to invoke joy and beauty and form an accord with nature. The bold use of colour, uneven surfaces, curves are there to invoke a feeling of surprise and discovery. There are multicoloured tiles and sculptures that mean the sense of discovery is a journey

³² For the relevant sections of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 see Appendix 4: Significance Assessment Information.

and unfolds as you enter the building. The living roof is central to the philosophy that the building forms an accord with nature.

Architectural Significance or Value

The building is nationally and internationally significant. This is the only public building to a Hundertwasser design in New Zealand which the architect/artist had direct involvement with its creation. Hundertwasser has an international reputation as an architect, and has buildings in Europe, North America, Japan and New Zealand. The buildings share common architectural features with the use of what he called tree tenants, spontaneous vegetation, uneven floors. His buildings testify to his commitment to diversity instead of monotony, for unregulated irregularities for living in harmony with nature, for beauty and for joy. The building is unique it is a living entity that looks after the environment and the people who use it.

Historical Significance or Value

The building is associated with an international artist and architect who lived and contributed to New Zealand when it was undergoing social change becoming nuclear free and the growth of the conservation movement. This is the only publicly accessible building in which the architect had a direct contribution to its construction, it is unique in New Zealand.

Public toilets as visible public spaces a trend in the later twentieth century and this is a tourist attraction in its own right.

Social Significance or Value

The building has high social significance as its genesis came from the community. There was a direct request to the architect/artist by the Kawakawa Community Board to design a building that would have a positive economic impact upon tourism and the community. The building was built with great deal of voluntary labour including the local High School, artisans and artists from the community. The building has led to a figure quoted as 1 million visits per year and other buildings in the main street applying Hundertwasser motifs to encourage visitation and spending. The economic and social impact of the building has greatly contributed to wealth of the community not only in dollars but to an artistic vision that is apparent when you look at other buildings in the town.

3.2. Section 66 (3) Assessment

This place was assessed against the Section 66(3) criteria and found to qualify under the following criteria a, b, c, e, f, g, h, and j. The assessment concludes that this place should be listed as a Category 1 historic place.

- (a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history.

The building aligns with environmentalism in New Zealand this is reflected in the use of recycled materials, community engagement, the use of a living roof. The revitalisation of Kawakawa through tourism - making the building the nations most visited public toilet. But importantly showcasing how architecture and art can be used to make a functionalist toilet block into an attraction and having positive economic benefit to the community.

- (b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history

Hundertwasser was not born in New Zealand and as an international architect/artist choose to make New Zealand his home. There are three public buildings in Northland inspired by his design criteria. The idea of using recycled materials, low environmental impact, living roofs is finding credence with a larger segment of the population as we contemplate a low carbon future. His ideas on building design by using environmental principles was ahead of his time.

- (c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history.

The building expresses a fundamental optimism and joy using colour, organic shapes and choice of materials. The building provides a sense of time of nascent environmentalism when these ideas will become more important to our nation. As people explore the building they will come to understand the principles of the architect.

- (d) The community association with, or public esteem for the place the place is held in high public esteem by the community.

It was commissioned by the community to provide stimulation to tourism and have positive economic benefits. The community were engaged in the building of the place and Kawakawa buildings have adopted many of the design motifs of Hundertwasser in

the main street. The community has also commissioned another building and park in the memory of Hundertwasser that was opened in October 2020.

(e) The potential of the place for public education.

The building is on State Highway 1 and is highly visible because of the connection with the Hundertwasser gardens it forms an area which tells a story of the architect and artist.

(g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place

Hundertwasser Public Toilets has special value for its technical design because of the use recycled materials, living roof, curves rather than straight lines, use of colour and use of environmental principles.

(h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place

This is the only public building in New Zealand which the architect had a direct relationship with, the other buildings were built after his passing.

(j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places. There are only three examples of public Hundertwasser buildings in New Zealand. This is rarest of the subset as he was involved in the creation of the building there is only one. It is unique in New Zealand.

Summary of Significance or Values

Hundertwasser was an internationally renowned artist and architect and has buildings around the globe including Europe, North America, Japan, and New Zealand. This is the only public building in New Zealand that he had direct involvement with it is unique. The other public buildings in New Zealand were built after his death. The buildings share common architectural features with the use of what he called tree tenants, spontaneous vegetation, uneven floors. His buildings testify to his commitment to diversity instead of monotony, for unregulated irregularities for living in harmony with nature, for beauty and for joy. The building is unique it is a living entity that looks after the environment and the people who use it.

The Kawakawa Public toilets are also associated with national movements in New Zealand being nuclear free and the raising of a national conservation ethos because of the use of living plants and recycled materials as part of the structure of the building. This ethos is

becoming more mainstream as New Zealand looks at a low carbon future and the building may give lessons to future architects and designers.

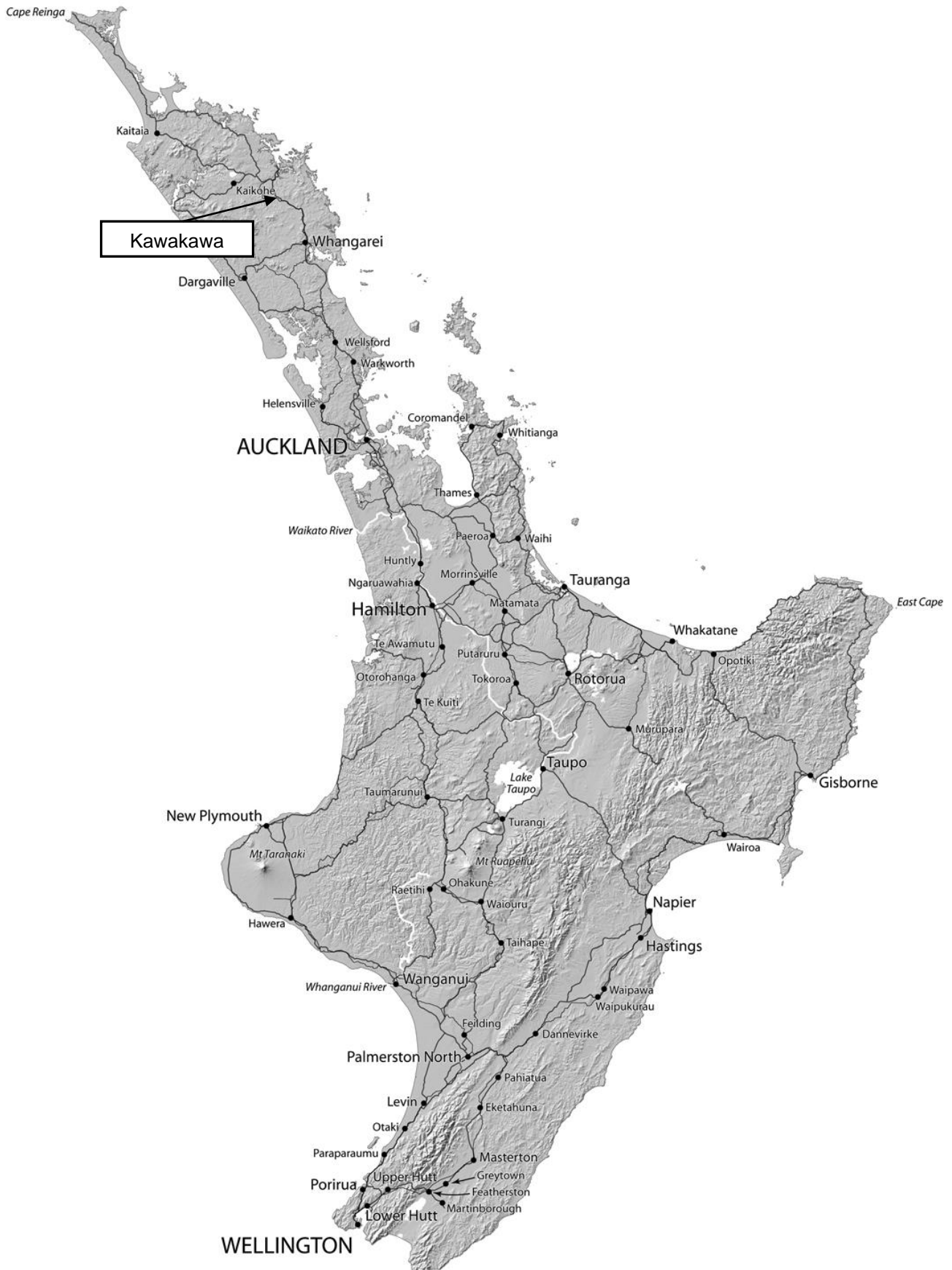
The Hundertwasser Public toilets were built by the community for the community to stimulate economic and artistic growth. The legacy of the building is that it has lived up to its promise and is now a tourist attraction with a reportedly one million visitors per year. The building has not only provided income from tourists, but Kawakawa has adopted many of the building techniques that Hundertwasser used, and the result is a changed face to the small town. The community hold their public toilets in high esteem as evidenced by the way the community had an active part in building and decorating the public toilets.

The building is a manifestation of the philosophy of the artist/architect that the building should be a peace accord with nature. This is articulated by using recycled materials and the use of a living roof. It also expresses the vision that harmony with beauty and harmony with nature makes us really feel good; it brings joy. It is a joyful building to be in and explore. It is unique in New Zealand as it is only public building that he was directly involved with.

4. APPENDICES

4.1. Appendix 1: Visual Identification Aids

Location Maps



Maps of Extent



Extent includes the land described as Lot 1 DP 46977 (RT NA35B/1242) and Legal Road, North Auckland Land District and the building known as Hundertwasser Public Toilets thereon. Extent includes the attached verandah canopy and posts and associated cobblestone paving. (Google Earth with QuickMap overlay).



**RECORD OF TITLE
UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT 2017
FREEHOLD
Search Copy**




R.W. Muir
Registrar-General
of Land

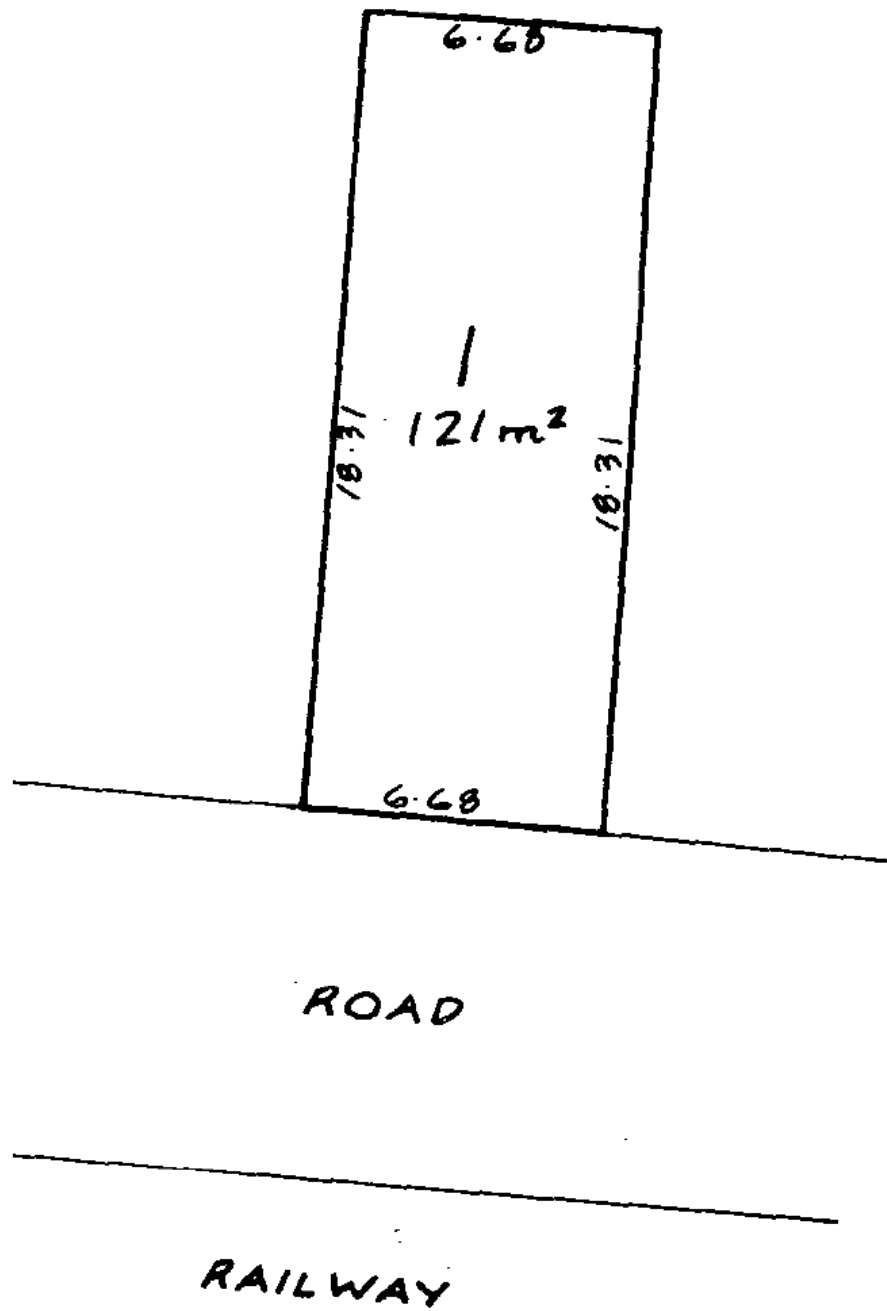
Identifier NA35B/1242
Land Registration District North Auckland
Date Issued 08 September 1977
Prior References
NA17B/1175

Estate	Fee Simple
Area	121 square metres more or less
Legal Description	Lot 1 Deposited Plan 46977
Registered Owners	
Bay of Islands County Council	

Interests

Transaction ID 604119
Client Reference afoster001

Search Copy Dated 26/02/23 1:31 pm, Page 1 of 2
Register Only



Legal Road

Parcel Details				
Appellation:	Lot 1 Deposited Plan 46977		Parcel Area (ha):	0.0121
Land District:	North Auckland		Total Area:	
Statute:			Graphical Area (ha):	0.0122
Non Survey Information:			Parcel Intent:	
Associated Title Details				
Appellation	Title(s)	Estate Type	Owner(s)	
Lot 1 Deposited Plan 46977	NA35B/1242 View Title	Fee Simple	Bay of Islands County Council	
Associated Street Address				
60 Gillies Street , Kawakawa				
60 State Highway 1 , Kawakawa				
Valuation Reference Information				
Valuation Reference No.	Capital Value	Land Value	Capital Value Date	Street No
  00419-00701	\$230,000	\$33,000	01-Aug-2019	60
Rating Valuation information may be historic.				
Click here to print a general Comparable Sales Report for residential properties.				
Report Generated from Quickmap (http://www.quickmap.co.nz) on Sunday, 26 February 2023.				
Information provided by this service is sourced from third parties. Custom Software can not and does not provide any warranties or assurances of any kind whatsoever in relation to any data or materials provided through this service. Any person wishing to rely on the information shown must independently verify such information.				

4.2. Appendix 2: Visual Aids to Historical Information

Historical Photographs



1975 aerial image showing Hundertwasser Public Toilets shortly after initial construction with early landscaping arrangement (Retrolens 1975-01-5 SN2786, RN A, PN 2)

4.3. Appendix 3: Significance Assessment Information

Part 4 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

Chattels or object or class of chattels or objects (Section 65(6))

Under Section 65(6) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, an entry on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero relating to a historic place may include any chattel or object or class of chattels or objects –

- a) Situated in or on that place; and
- b) Considered by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to contribute to the significance of that place; and
- c) Proposed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero.

Significance or value (Section 66(1))

Under Section 66(1) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may enter any historic place or historic area on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero if the place possesses aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological, or traditional significance or value.

Category of historic place (Section 66(3))

Under Section 66(3) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga may assign Category 1 status or Category 2 status to any historic place, having regard to any of the following criteria:

- a) The extent to which the place reflects important or representative aspects of New Zealand history
- b) The association of the place with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history
- c) The potential of the place to provide knowledge of New Zealand history
- d) The importance of the place to tangata whenua
- e) The community association with, or public esteem for, the place
- f) The potential of the place for public education
- g) The technical accomplishment, value, or design of the place
- h) The symbolic or commemorative value of the place

- i) The importance of identifying historic places known to date from an early period of New Zealand settlement
- j) The importance of identifying rare types of historic places
- k) The extent to which the place forms part of a wider historical and cultural area

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for the purpose of assigning Category 1 or Category 2 status to a historic place, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3)

Additional criteria may be prescribed in regulations made under this Act for entering historic places or historic areas of interest to Māori, wāhi tūpuna, wāhi tapu, or wāhi tapu areas on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero, provided they are not inconsistent with the criteria set out in subsection (3) or (5) or in regulations made under subsection (4).

NOTE: Category 1 historic places are 'places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value.' Category 2 historic places are 'places of historical or cultural heritage significance or value.'