

**“The Art of the Achievable”:
An Examination of Heritage Assessment Practice at the
Department of Conservation**

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Abstract

This dissertation examines heritage assessment at the New Zealand Department of Conservation. It explores the heritage assessment process through two central research questions: *'What is the state of current heritage assessment at the Department of Conservation?'* and *'What place and form could heritage assessments have and take in future practice at the Department of Conservation?'* Responding to a gap in the literature and lack of critical analysis of the heritage assessment procedure in the New Zealand context, the research considers the ways in which heritage assessment is carried out and examines heritage assessment as a tool through which heritage is understood and assigned value and significance. The timeliness of this work is highlighted by the currently few existing evaluations providing a critical analysis of the heritage assessment procedure in New Zealand.

This research employs an interdisciplinary theoretical framework developed from the literature of heritage studies and its related fields, in particular history and archaeology. This study is framed with reference to the postmodern theoretical paradigm of 'authorised heritage discourse' and critical realism, and employs a mixed method approach to the research, and employs documentary analysis and interviews with current staff working with historic heritage at the Department of Conservation.

The main finding emerging from this research is that heritage assessment is an essential, if not pivotal, but under-utilised element of heritage management, and that appropriate outcomes for heritage can only be reached through a more effective heritage assessment framework. The dissertation concludes that currently the Department of Conservation heritage assessment framework fails to achieve this to a suitable standard, makes several recommendations for change, and argues that it is only by addressing the situation DOC will be able to deliver maximum outcomes for heritage in an increasingly resource-constrained environment – and continue to accomplish sustainable heritage management, what one respondent called 'the art of the achievable'.

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List of Abbreviations

DOC	Department of Conservation
NZHPT	New Zealand Historic Places Trust
MCH	Ministry for Culture and Heritage
HPA	<i>Historic Places Act 1993</i>
RMA	<i>Resource Management Act 1991</i>
CA	<i>Conservation Act 1987</i>
HR	Historic Ranger
HTA	Historic Technical Advisor
AHD	Authorised Heritage Discourse (after Smith 2006)
HA	Heritage Assessment
CP	Conservation Plan

Glossary of Terms

Hapu	Kinship group, clan, tribe, sub-tribe – section of a large kinship group
Iwi	Extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race, large group of people descended from a common ancestor
Tangata whenua	Local people, hosts indigenous people of the land – people born of the whenua
Taonga	Property, goods, possessions, treasure, something prized
Wahi tapu	Sacred place, historic place
Whakapapa	Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent
Whenua	Land, country, placenta

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Figure 1. The number of key historic sites where heritage assessment reports have been completed 36

Introduction: Assessing historic heritage in New Zealand

Heritage has been called “a nomadic term that travels easily... a term capricious enough to accommodate widely discrepant meanings” (Samuels 1994, 205). In New Zealand, historic heritage has never been more popular or more divisive than it is now. In the wake of the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 – 2011, heritage, in particular built heritage, has been embedded into the national psyche in unexpected ways. It has become clear that historic heritage holds an important position in the lives of New Zealanders related not only to its physical presence, but the emotional and cultural connections that people have to it, and the role that it plays in their national identity.

Questions have now arisen out of this national tragedy over what to rebuild, what to recreate, and what to allow to be destroyed in the name of public safety and progress. How to make these decisions, however, is where the current challenge lies for heritage managers – in the assessment and valuation of historic heritage. Historically the ways in which heritage agencies assess heritage has not been extensively evaluated. It is understood that there is a requirement for these agencies to assess the value of heritage, to select some at the expense of others, and to then manage these places, but the process by which this is carried out is not as clearly defined. It has become apparent that there is a need to make the tools with which we examine heritage more explicit. This research is a response not only to this practical need, but to the need for further research into heritage based around an “increased engagement with the tools – physical, practical, and intellectual – that we employ to study these phenomena”(Sørensen and Carman 2009, 4).

The process of heritage assessment is, therefore, the central concern of this research. Heritage assessment practice is a critical issue in New Zealand and one deserving of more consideration. Heritage assessment, for the purposes of this research, is best understood as the process of evaluating and assigning value or worth and thereby defining the significance of that heritage. Ideally, heritage assessments should precede management and inform the decision making process for the protection of that place. The New Zealand Department of Conservation (hereafter DOC), by number of sites managed, is New Zealand’s largest heritage management agency, so the process of

assessing heritage places for value and significance effectively is an integral element of their ability to sustainably manage heritage. The rationale for this research is focussed around two research questions: *What is the state of current heritage assessment at the Department of Conservation;* and *What place and form could heritage assessment have and take in future practice at the Department of Conservation?*

Literature Review

The aim of this literature review is to set the research problems identified in the introduction within the relevant literature and within the context of heritage praxis. It will highlight particular studies and substantiate the need for this research on heritage theory and practice. It has been asserted that:

there is a shortage of critical literature in the New Zealand context...related in part to the novelty of heritage studies worldwide and in part to the small scale of a heritage profession dominated by archaeologists and conservation architects...relatively un-professionalised and lacking accreditation through formal qualifications, the heritage sector is also quite explicitly anti-academic and anti-theoretical.

(Pishief 2012, 25-26).

This study, therefore, will attempt to address the acknowledged gaps in the New Zealand literature focussing upon the practice of heritage assessment at the Department of Conservation. I first outline the contextual and theoretical framework from which I will address my central research questions. The review begins with outlining critical heritage studies, followed by an overview of the nature and qualities of heritage. It also outlines the practical and operational strategies employed in the assessment of heritage as they are seen in the literature in order to ground this study in the context of practice.

Overview of critical heritage studies

Heritage studies as a distinct field is made up of a body of theory that has been steadily growing out of architecture, archaeology, anthropology, history, and museology. Coming out of these other more developed modes of analysis, critical heritage studies has borrowed heavily from the expertise of these related fields. The conceptual frameworks of each of these disciplines have been developed to create the theoretical basis of heritage studies, “which now represents a vast network of interrelated elements that is undeniably more than the sum of its parts” (Donaghey 2008, 7). Critical heritage

studies have attracted the interest of many scholars and practitioners who wished to comment on, provide guidance for, and complete research into heritage. As such, the focus of heritage studies, i.e. the past in any number of different forms, can be understood and analysed in a myriad of different, often contested, ways ranging from those embedded in Western concepts of ownership to definitions of intangible heritage or heritage associated with a particular feature of a landscape. It is not surprising, therefore, that debates arise, and that our need to “theorise and ‘make sense of’ the competing values attributed to heritage, and the processes and strategies employed to control such values, has become increasingly important” (Smith 2006, 62). Critical heritage studies seeks to understand and theorise what is meant when we define something as heritage, examine the process of “what happens when heritage is done” (Carman 2002, 4), and recognise that “heritage wasn’t only about the past – although it was that too – it also wasn’t just about material things – though it was that as well – heritage was a process of engagement, an act of communication, and an act of making meaning in and for the present” (Smith 2006, 1). For the purposes of this dissertation, heritage studies is best summarised as the examination of the ideas, methods, and underlying philosophies surrounding cultural heritage management, all the while recognising that heritage is closely involved with people and identity, the places in which they live, and the things that they treasure (Pishief 2012, 4).

History and heritage

Writers have become concerned with defining heritage as separate from history or an overarching concept of the past. Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000, 2) take particular care in providing distinction between these terms stating that:

the three terms, the past, history, and heritage, have elided in practice into interchangeable synonyms...the past, all that has ever happened is not our direct concern...if concerns, however, focus upon the ways in which we use the past now, or upon the attempts of a present to project aspects of itself into an imagined future, then we are engaged with heritage. The concept of time has remained central: heritage is a view from the present, either backwards to a past or forward to a future.

David Lowenthal, in particular, has examined the nature of heritage as a term and a concept, noting that “heritage” is a term that has been used casually, and in many cases inaccurately, as we have become more and more preoccupied with preserving perceived

valuable aspects of the past. Lowenthal, more so than other authors, discusses the confusion that occurs between definitions of history and definitions of heritage, stating that “heritage is not history at all; while it borrows from and enlivens historical study; heritage is not an inquiry into the past but a celebration of it” (Lowenthal 1996, x). While Lowenthal takes the position of a heritage sceptic – that heritage is something that we, in the present, cling to: a socially constructed form of memory whose interpretation is “not an effort to know what actually happened but a profession of faith in a past tailored to present-day purposes” (Ibid) – the boundary between what defines history and what defines heritage is arguably not so explicit.

The interdisciplinary space within which heritage studies developed makes it difficult to see the distinction between the nature and definitions of history and heritage clearly. Ashworth has asserted that there is a clear distinction between history and heritage, but that both are intrinsically related, for heritage is a product or commodity reliant upon resources provided by history (Ashworth & Tunbridge 1994, 13). Davison states that heritage “is by its very nature, an unstable and contested idea” (Davison 2000, 130), and is one that cannot and should not be oversimplified to fit within a set of parameters. The more complex nature of heritage that Davison projects stems from the idea that heritage can be understood as “things that represent ideals” (Aplin 2002, 14-15). Both authors, while noting the value of Lowenthal’s work on the origins of heritage, are in contention with his arguments on the basis that Lowenthal analyses heritage almost purely in social terms, while they theorise the past – heritage and history – as an economic resource, and as a commodity. In this sense, it could be said that the main difference between history and heritage is that heritage is more often selected for or against, and appropriated by particular groups. Heritage is the selection of items, and not necessarily tangible things, that we can use to tell our individual or group histories (Aplin 2002, 15).

Interpreting heritage

Heritage, or the past in general, can be read and interpreted in a number of different ways, the process of which is an act of encoding a particular form of language through which meanings are communicated in the present (Hodder 1988). Heritage managers take on the role of reading and interpreting the past for the present, giving it meaning and significance and simultaneously creating a cultural product and political resource

(Graham 2002, 1007). Heritage that has been identified in this way is a particularly contentious area of heritage studies as interpretation can “actively or potentially disinherit or exclude those who do not subscribe to, or are embraced within, the terms of meaning defining that heritage” (Ashworth et al 2005, 34). Trigger states that “people, and not inanimate machines, write and create the past” (1989, 106) and much of the commentary that has been made in this vein has been focussed upon the roles that the past has in the present (Carman & Sørensen 2009, 18). Graham et al. (2000, 1-3) assert that heritage values are often shaped and conditioned by the present and that perspectives are blurred and impacted upon by current concerns and predispositions. The ascription of values and significances privatises and personalises heritage, creating conditions for dissonance to occur – particularly where heritage is understood as belonging to one group at the expense of another group.

Post-modern writers like Eilean Hooper Greenhill have increasingly used the museum as a case study for research into the contentions that occur through interpretation. Like those involved in ‘the New Museology’, Hooper Greenhill asserts that one of the challenges to the modern museum is its authorised voice. Postmodern theorists advocate for the inclusion of a multitude of different, often silenced, voices for the telling of a story, and Hooper Greenhill states that “formerly silent voices are being heard, and new cultural identities are being forged from the remains of the past” (Hooper Greenhill 2004, 563). This idea of a multiplicity of voices being heard in the museum, in displays and interpretation can be used outside of the museum as well. Smith (2006, 298-304) offers an interesting and complementary idea to that of Eilean Hooper Greenhill in the shape of ‘authorised heritage discourse’ (hereafter AHD), stating that it “takes its cue from the grand narratives of Western national and elite class experiences, and reinforces the idea of innate cultural value tied to time-depth, monumentality, expert knowledge and aesthetics” (Smith 2006, 299).

The AHD, in Smith’s opinion, is what is used to determine: what counts as heritage, what value is, where funding should be allocated, and whose identities are to be explored most fully. Smith’s notion of the AHD relies on a postmodernist understanding of heritage as a social process and upon its ability to carry out ‘cultural

work'¹ (Smith 2006, 298-304). Smith's observation that heritage is a discourse flows from theorists such as Michel Foucault (1972) and his discussion on discourse and the role that it plays in the process of legitimising power. Later works by Foucault (1977, 1980) also stress that power, like discourse, operates by rules of exclusion particularly of those who do not have the power.² It has been argued that for some, power is regarded as being grounded in authority and defined as a legitimate right, whereas others state that it is the authorisation of power itself that represents the act of power and imposition (Torfing 1999, 155). The legitimisation of such systems and the exaltation of the professional is asserted by Harrison's analysis of heritage management as being categorised by top down or bottom up approaches – as officially prescribed and authorised heritage or as unofficial or community heritage (2010). It has similarly been argued that “the use of the past in the construction of community identity revolves around the political authority of those who hold the right to tell its story” (Pearce 1998, 3).

In heritage studies, there is an increasing recognition highlighted by the analysis of the AHD that it is the role of the professional over the community, whose heritage is being ‘managed’, that is exalted. Critical realism as a paradigm notes that certain individuals and groups within a society are privileged over others, that understandings and explanations of reality can never be isolated from ideological inscription, and that un-‘critical’ research frameworks and practices are generally implicated in the reproduction of systems of oppression (Grabow 2006, 66). In light of this and the AHD, the interpretation of historic heritage has led to questions over whose values are being asserted, by whom, for whom, and for what use (Aplin 2002, 31-32). The assertion that some values or ideas are given more credibility and therefore count for more than

¹ Cultural work is asserted by Smith (2006) as the product of sets of practices – in this case heritage practices that are focussed on management and conservation of heritage sites, places, and objects, and practices tied to the visitation of sites and institutions within tourism and leisure industries (2006, 12). The AHD carries out ‘cultural work’ through legitimising certain experiences and identities within the discourse of practices (2006, 299).

² Discourse, in these arguments can be loosely defined as the different ways of structuring knowledge and, thus, social practice – a way of making sense of the world by observing, interpreting and making meaning (Smith 1996, 101; Fairclough 1993, 3). Discourse can also be understood as representing particular ideologies – it has the ability to guide thought and cause that particular ideology to appear normal and inevitable (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105; Torfing 1999, 13). For heritage the use of particular discursive practices can have a number of consequences particularly relating to power, authority, and control as described by the AHD (Smith 2006, 299-304).

others has led to a number of questions about the role of the practitioner and the role that heritage plays in the present, as outlined by Grabow (2006, 65):

Which interpretation of the past, based on what kind of underlying assumptions, is given supremacy over others? Why is this particular interpretation of culture heritage promoted at the expense of others? Whose interests are advanced, how, and in what kind of milieu are they mediated?

(Grabow 2006, 65)

Heritage practice

Heritage practice, or at least the practice of heritage assessment, is based around “the ability to place things in certain conceptual boxes, separating them out from all the other things in the world and consequently thinking about and treating them differently” (Carman 2002, 2-5). This is a fair description of what heritage managers at DOC are expected to do when carrying out a heritage assessment. They are expected to look at various types of heritage – objects, buildings, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes – and decide where on a spectrum of heritage status it fits. The values that are assigned to heritage that are used as the basis for a statement of significance have been developed from the same disciplines that heritage studies was drawn from – in particular archaeology, architecture, and history. The evaluation of heritage within these contexts should highlight that heritage’s possession of certain values. These qualities should be what cause that heritage to stand apart and be interpreted as making that heritage of significance and importance.

The importance of significance assessment for heritage practice is that it allows for comparison between different places, as Donaghey points out “terms such as ‘value’ and ‘importance’ are relative concepts, best described in comparative terms. Put simply, it allows a comparison – this place is more significant than that – although the reasoning behind such comparisons may be less straightforward” (Donaghey 2008, 12). Being able to establish a context of heritage places in New Zealand is one of the most important uses for heritage assessment. Fundamentally heritage is made up of many interrelated elements - cultural, historic, natural, tangible, and intangible - and in New Zealand the distinctions between these elements are often narrow and intertwined. For heritage managers, this creates serious problems for practice. The practice of heritage

management is tied to the idea that, essentially, heritage is made up of the things that we want to keep. It is the places, things, and ideas from the past that heritage managers can give a present day value to, and it is the way in which these things can be understood and the theory that we can apply, that give them their present day value. Ian Baxter (2009, 85) writes that, at least in the United Kingdom, there has been a paradigm shift over the past two decades that has led to a greater appreciation of what “management of heritage does, rather than what we know *per se* about heritage”.

For heritage, working out how best to describe and define heritage has been a central concern, and many options based on different theoretical frameworks have been asserted. While heritage practitioners and heritage theorists continue to debate the definitions, certain elements are found clearly articulated in much of the literature – in particular the concepts of value ascription and significance. For DOC, the ability to assign value and make clear the significance of heritage for management is an important element of practice and management. As it is New Zealand’s largest heritage agency by the number of sites managed, DOC’s process of assessing heritage for value and significance is an integral element of their ability to sustainably manage heritage.

Significance and value

In heritage studies there is an ontological debate centred on whether or not heritage is made up of a number of intrinsic qualities, qualities that are independent of and beyond any values placed upon heritage by society that are observable and recordable, for example the architectural merit of a building (Allen 1994). An assessment based upon intrinsic qualities can be a one off as all places are understood to uniquely possess these qualities. On the other hand, there is the concept of relativity – that places possess a set of relative values that are acquired or ascribed to it rather than inherent. These values can be comparatively evaluated against another place and provisional judgements can be made (Startin 1993; Davidson 1993). A number of theorists (in particular post-processualists) have gone as far as to assert that heritage, particularly when understood as the material evidence and the fabric of the past, has no intrinsic value – heritage managers interpret the past in and for the present to give it meaning. It has been stated that “significance is a socially constructed concept not an absolute quality or essential characteristic... a cultural resource does not have value, but is given value through the process of significance assessment” (Smith 1996, 67). For this research both the

intrinsic and relative approaches will be used, following Donaghey, that “heritage values retain both intrinsic and relative qualities – essential, unchanging core values together with dynamic values that change over time (2008, 13).

It has been argued that significance has had little effort devoted to the clarification of its meaning in an application sense (Carter and Bramley, 2002), so for the purposes of this research, significance is best understood as a representative of a set of qualities that can be interpreted as being meaningful. Further to this, an element of comparison is frequently implicit in the act of assigning significance to heritage (Boyd 1996; Carter and Bramley, 2002). Significance is extremely subjective and by definition is a socially determined concept, an art rather than a science, and will unsurprisingly vary according to perceptions of what has value. Aplin remarks that “different people, both individually and in groups, define their heritage and the manner in which it is to be preserved and used, in different ways” (Aplin 2002, 28). As such it is important not to fall into the ontological and epistemological trap of oversimplifying what is an extremely complex situation. Heritage value is often assigned to those things or places that are held in high esteem by the community to which that heritage belongs. This value is defined by Pearson and Sullivan (1995, 7) as being the “capacity or potential of the place to demonstrate or symbolise, or contribute to our understanding of, or appreciation of, the human story”. These values, however, are extremely difficult to quantify and lead to tension between different groups (as discussed in relation to the AHD).

Heritage definitions

As the literature has noted heritage is extremely varied, so the act of assessing heritage for value and significance faces the problem of how to define and assign these values. At the most broad and basic level heritage may be understood and defined as “things of value, which are inherited” (Trapeznik and McLean 2000, 14). Heritage comprises the things that we want to keep, the things that we consider to be an inheritance or a legacy that we may pass on – things or places that we attribute significance and meaning to and have a connection with. The connection, and therefore significance or value assigned, that people have with heritage is often tied into their sense of a shared personal history, but this interpretation does not take into account heritage that we do not have this personal relationship with. Natural heritage, for instance, often has little

relationship to history. However, it is still representative of our past. These items, it has been asserted, represent geographies, places, and cultures rather than personal histories (Aplin 2002, 15). This point is particularly relevant to a New Zealand definition of heritage due to the unique connection that Maori have with the New Zealand landscape.

Often what past definitions fail to take into account is the more intangible nature and characteristics that heritage can have; a realisation the implications of which we are only really beginning to come to terms with. Corsane (2005, 6) notes that the museum and heritage sector should be expanding its understandings of what heritage is to include the definitions of intangible heritage set down by international groups like UNESCO. Any definition of heritage needs to take into account the complex nature of tangible and intangible heritage, and examine the relationship between them, particularly as scholars argue that:

places and objects do not have inherent value as 'heritage', their heritage value is created by the actions of people in the present, which include such things as acts of commemoration, narration, conservation, preservation, visitation and regulation. These give the sites and assemblages heritage value because the "real subject of heritage preservation and management processes" is value and meaning. For this reason, all heritage is 'intangible' whether these values or meanings are symbolised by a physical site, place, landscape or other physical representations, or are represented within the performances of languages, dance, oral histories or other forms of 'intangible' heritage.

(Pishief 2012, 21)

In the past few decades the concept of heritage has changed dramatically, from being assessed from a relatively narrow perspective and focussed on the physical or tangible (i.e. architectural preservation, archaeology, archives, and museums) to the present where it has taken on a network of other interrelated elements. Heritage can be tangible and intangible, natural and cultural, personal and collective. The ways in which heritage agencies and heritage managers interpret heritage as being valuable or significant has a large impact upon people's perception of it.

Heritage can be valued in a number of different and contested ways due to its inherent nature as something that can be culturally constructed, politically motivated, and of use to society at large as well as individual communities (Aplin 2002, 16). Current heritage practices are based on value-centric methodologies promoting 'places' that are

associated with a predefined set of qualities based on the professional's assessment. As Spenneman (2004, 1) suggests:

Cultural heritage management is, in essence, a facet of social engineering, whereby the physical remains of the past (and present) are selectively preserved pandering to values currently held by the community at large. Indeed, mid- and long-term protection of heritage places can occur only if such places are "embraced" or "owned" by the community.

Assessment makes clear what the significance and value of heritage is, but this raises the question of whether or not "heritage is heritage because it is subjected to the management and preservation/conservation process" (Smith 2006, 56). Definitions of heritage are often tied directly into the use that people think heritage can have, or does have, and in the past definitions have been restricted by certain beliefs about these uses.

Davison states that heritage is a term that has come down to us from the forebears of our societies in which value could be judged by ancestry (2000, 110). This basic definition, however, conjures up particularly Westernised ideals of heritage as being something that is tangible and that can be passed down to succeeding generations (Aplin 2002, 13), and is tied to the ways in which heritage can function in the modern world. The idea that heritage is a resource that can be classed as 'valuable' in a sense of economic worth is a difficult one for heritage management, particularly as the economic worth of heritage places is increasingly becoming an element of overall significance. In the current governmental environment, there is pressure placed upon agencies to be 'transparent' and accountable. There is an increasing emphasis throughout the heritage sector to treat heritage as a resource or asset that can be adapted to pay for its management, so the issue is not that heritage is being developed or re-used, the problem is that while the institution itself and its practitioners must be accountable, the material that they manage should not.

David Hamer suggests that New Zealand heritage managers are often more concerned with the technical aspects of heritage management rather than asking the question of 'why does it need preservation?' (1997, 253). When applied to DOC, who "manage for conservation purposes, all land, and all other natural and historic resources" (C.A 1987, 24), it is apparent that the question of 'why does it need preservation?' is one that should be asked as an aspect of procedure. An abundance of interdisciplinary literature makes

up/forms the field of heritage studies in New Zealand, but there is very little that is based on critical and in depth research into heritage management and its practice. The point that Hamer makes about heritage managers in New Zealand leaving the ‘why’ of heritage preservation underexplored is useful to this dissertation as it highlights the perception that there is a gap between the *theory* or the *ideal* of heritage management and its actual practice, particularly in terms of current heritage assessment practice providing the necessary information (needed) to justify funding and active management of heritage.

The question of what is and what is not heritage is a diverse debate, and according to Carman and Sørensen (2009, 11-27) one way to define it is to consider it as it is defined by law, or else as a set of practices. New Zealand has passed several different legislations that are aware of or open to the versatile nature of New Zealand heritage. These are the *Historic Places Act* (HPA 1993), the *Conservation Act* (CA 1987), and the *Resource Management Act* (RMA 1991). These form the legal framework for most agencies within which to create procedure to identify and assign significance and value to historic heritage in terms of the law. The problem that these particular pieces of legislation hold for heritage managers is the fact that, while there is an awareness of the meanings of heritage, there is a “lack of basic definitions of ‘culture’ and ‘heritage’ in law and regulations, which makes it difficult for the historic heritage sector to be clear about what it is to perform” (Warren-Findlay 2001, 40). Historically ‘culture’ and ‘heritage’ are terms that have been used interchangeably and indiscriminately by New Zealand heritage managers to describe the way in which we view the past, an expression of what John Carman states is an “anti-theoretical stance [that] abstract theory is...of little practical relevance” (2002, 40). The relationship between legislation and the practical management of heritage remains a challenging one.

Perhaps a hangover of our colonial background is the very real predominance in New Zealand to adhere to traditional/European definitions and models of ownership. This makes it incredibly difficult to recognise the cultural or ‘special’ values that are attributed to a landscape or place. Our legislation is value-centric, promoting places that are associated with a particular set of qualities or criteria based around aesthetics, politics, and uses. This does not recognise the value of places that are significant for their connections to people: physical, spiritual, emotional, or mythological (Stephenson

2005, 343-347). Harry Allen states that legislation (in its current form) “does not reflect the complex reality of the present society rather they continue an ‘elitist’ view that is now outdated” (Allen 1998, 3), while Greg Vossler suggests that historic heritage legislation fails to provide a coherent and unified framework for the protection and management of heritage (Vossler 2000, 69). Australian heritage professionals in 1979 adapted the Venice Charter (1964) so that it would better reflect the Australian context and the heritage values and types that can be found there. The *Australian Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (known as the Burra Charter, ICOMOS Australia 1999) impacted heritage professionals internationally, particularly the way in which decisions were made about the meaning of heritage sites, places, and landscapes. The Burra Charter redefined heritage categories, changing from the original grouping of ‘sites and monuments’ to ‘places of cultural significance’, switching the emphasis from archaeological understandings of material culture to an anthropological understanding of material culture and the meanings that humans attribute to it. The Burra Charter also laid out the set of definitions of significance as ‘aesthetic, historic, scientific, or social value for past, present or future generations’ (Australia ICOMOS 1999, Article 1.2).

The inclusion of ‘social value’ was an innovation at the time. Writers have discussed the term ‘social value’, noting its special character as a set of meanings attached to places by groups, arguing that places, our surroundings and the landscape, are more than just the sum of their parts – their physical forms or their histories (Johnston 1992, 1-2). The Charter was written to include both minority and majority groups of the Australian population, thus compelling heritage professionals to acknowledge community values in their interpretations. More recently, Australia’s more holistic approach to heritage interpretation led heritage practitioner James Semple Kerr to devise the guide to writing conservation plans for places of European Cultural significance (Kerr 1996). The methods set out by Kerr have been adopted around the world, providing a fairly fit for purpose method for understanding the cultural values and special characteristics of a heritage place, site, or landscape, not only from a practitioner’s perspective but from the community’s perspective also. Chris Johnston, in writing for an Australian audience fits in well with the discussion of the aims of the conservation plan, as she also focussed on stressing the need to take account of intangible values in any assessment of tangible historic heritage (Johnston 1992, 2-3).

The need to initiate a similar process of engagement with communities who are more aware of the different types of value that can be associated with a place has been argued by Roger Thomas who states that “the emphasis on the role of the ‘expert’ in heritage management in New Zealand is contrary to the realisation, becoming more noticeable in the literature, that heritage is deeply personal, and individuals and communities need to enjoy, experience, and manage their own heritage” (Thomas 2004, 197).

While there is an extensive body of literature available that focusses on the assignation of significance and value, that attempts to define heritage, and that offers ways of understanding and interpreting historic heritage, there are some significant omissions. Heritage assessment is not a topic that can be seen to have been ‘in vogue’ in New Zealand and as such there is little critical literature based on New Zealand examples, and those that are, do not effectively critique the process of heritage assessment within the context of management.

My theoretical framework is based on the postmodern concept of the AHD and critical realism as a paradigm. Through these two frames of reference I seek to explore current un-‘critical’ frameworks for heritage assessment. This framework will allow me to examine the process of heritage assessment with a greater appreciation of what heritage management does. By taking the stance that heritage value is made up of both intrinsic and relative qualities and that assigning value and significance to heritage is a constructed concept and not an absolute quality, I hope to be able to examine the academic and practical discourses that are present in this topic and gain a better understanding of the challenges present in heritage management.

Methodology

In this section, I outline the methodologies used in undertaking this research. There has been little critical research carried out that focusses upon the heritage assessment process at a New Zealand agency. Relevant research has been addressed in the literature review of this thesis; the work carried out by Pishief (2012, 25-26) has been particularly useful in acknowledging that in New Zealand ‘the heritage sector is quite explicitly anti-academic and anti-theoretical’, while in wider heritage practice, it has been stated that there is a need for ‘engagement with the tools – physical, practical and intellectual – that we employ to study these phenomena’ (Sørensen & Carman 2009, 4). As the literature has shown, the lack of examination of current heritage assessment practice is not an isolated issue found only in New Zealand, but is reflected worldwide.

DOC was an ideal place to base this research for a number of reasons. Based upon the gaps in the literature on heritage, my research aimed to answer two central questions - *What is the state of current heritage assessment at the Department of Conservation* and *What place and form could heritage assessment have and take in future practice at the Department of Conservation*. Two main methods, interviews and examination of documentary evidence, were considered to be the most effective ways of answering these questions. To understand the heritage assessment process and to ground this study in practice, I interviewed four DOC staff based on their positions as historic heritage managers at different levels within the agency. The interviews were used to provide context to the heritage assessment process as it is currently carried out at DOC. The interviews were semi-structured and followed a “multi-method, flexible” approach in order to determine the different forces that shape DOC heritage assessment practice (Searle 2010, 9; Wagstaff 2008, 14). It also allowed for the exploration of the interviewee’s position, values, attitudes, and feelings towards historic heritage management in New Zealand most thoroughly (Sørensen 2009, 164). The main methods were the general interview guide approach and the standardised open ended interview (Patton 1990, 342). Within the interview guide approach, the interviewer is free to probe respondents for further answers and to explore the subject in more depth (Patton 1990, 283). In the standardised open ended interview, a set of questions are arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence of questions in order to minimize variation in the questions (Patton 1990, 342). The

advantages of using a multi-method approach in the interviews are that it allowed for the best use of time, made the interview process more systematic, and ensured that the information that was captured from the interviews was of a similar nature due to the same questions being asked. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed as the interviews were to provide the raw data for analysis, as such it was essential that the respondent's actual words were captured (Patton 1990, 346).

For the analysis, I focussed upon using a thematic approach, which as a method is extremely flexible (Braun and Clarke 2006, 78). Thematic analysis is a useful method for identifying and reporting patterns or themes within and across the material collected. It is important to note that in thematic analysis the themes that are identified are often referred to as being 'discovered' or 'emerging' from the data. This denies the active nature of the researcher in this process (Taylor and Ussher 2001 in Braun and Clark 2006, 80) and is something that I have been aware of throughout my analysis. The analysis software package NVivo was used to help identify the major 'units of meaning', followed by the themes and subthemes from this material.

When carrying out research that involves respondents, such as these interviews, it is the responsibility of the researcher to act ethically, ensuring that the research does not harm the participants and to conclude the research if it proves to be harmful (Sarantakos 2005, 19). All participants in this research were provided with an information sheet detailing the nature of this research, who would be able to access the data, and detailing how they could leave the research if needed. All were asked to complete an informed consent form agreeing to be part of the study. Following the interviews, all were sent the transcript of their interviews, allowing them to comment upon or clarify their statements.

I also reviewed documentary evidence in the form of heritage assessments carried out by DOC. This was in order to gain an understanding of the current heritage assessment procedure. Some of these were hard copies obtained from DOC, while others were found online.

Outline

This dissertation began by establishing the analytical framework within which this research takes place, relating first to the nature of heritage studies as a discipline, followed by an overview of the principles by which heritage is defined and value is understood. I have also established the research design of this dissertation, outlining the methodological approach, the research methods undertaken for the data collection and analysis.

Chapter One is an exploration of heritage legislation in New Zealand, looking at the historic developments that have led to the creation of today's legislation and heritage management agencies. Chapter One will also provide an overview of the Department of Conservation, its place in New Zealand as a heritage management agency, and establish the heritage assessment procedure that is the focus of this research. While it would have been useful to analyse the approaches to heritage assessment that are taken by other agencies, such as the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, in more detail the scale of this research dictated that this would not be possible. By focussing upon the Department of Conservation this research can be used as an indication of the current state of heritage assessment in New Zealand as the major issues that are faced by DOC are also faced by other agencies.

Chapters Two and Three present the findings of this research that were established through the analysis of the interview material and documentary research, with Chapter Two focussing upon the major theme of 'Current Practice', and Chapter Three on the major theme 'Future Practice' and the concept of 'Heritage Values'. The material presented in these chapters is analysed and discussed in terms of my central research questions and represents the basis on which my conclusions on the heritage assessment process at DOC will be constructed.

The conclusion restates the aims of this research and summarise the key findings, discussing the implications of this research for heritage studies. It also acknowledges the limitations of this research and outlines possible directions for future research, specifically into the processes of heritage assessment in New Zealand, and generally into further developing the ways in which we understand and assess heritage in New Zealand.

Chapter One

“The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there”:

The development of heritage management in New Zealand

Introduction

In 2011, the National Government introduced the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Bill into Parliament which had its first reading in 2012. This legislation seeks to rename the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, reform its governance structure and the archaeological authority process, and introduce emergency authorities to apply in the event of a natural disaster.³ This Bill is the latest in a long history of heritage and site protection legislation to be developed in Parliament. At a broad level, heritage management in New Zealand represents a huge investment in terms of legislation, planning, and funding. As has been established in the preceding literature review and introduction, this dissertation seeks a greater understanding of heritage assessment practice within DOC, due to the fact that there is increasingly a need to critically examine heritage assessment as an element of heritage practice, to inspect how and why places are selected, assessed, and preserved.

In order to better understand the current situation and process of heritage assessment at DOC it is important to understand the role that DOC has in managing heritage in New Zealand in relation to other agencies and heritage legislation. This chapter is not intended to present a detailed discussion of heritage legislation in New Zealand, but provide an overview of particular elements as they are considered in relation to heritage management and practice at DOC. It seeks to outline briefly the history of heritage management in New Zealand, provide an overview of the legislation that has been developed and the major agencies responsible for heritage conservation and preservation. Lastly I describe the Department of Conservation, and outline its role in historic heritage management and the heritage assessment process. Chapters Two and Three will build from the background presented here, focussing on current heritage assessment practice at DOC and what place and form heritage assessment should take in future practice.

³ ‘Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Bill’, accessed May 2013, <http://www.mch.govt.nz/what-we-do/our-projects/current/review-historic-places-act-1993>

A history of our own: heritage from 1840 to now

New Zealand, like many other colonial settler societies, was established with a particular *Zeitgeist* and ethos, as well as a number of cultural paradigms imported from Britain. Yet, by the turn of the century many major changes had occurred, separating New Zealand and putting in place the conditions for the creation of our own unique identity. The Treaty of Waitangi, as the country's founding document, had been signed in 1840, making New Zealand officially a British Colony. Following the signing of this document, European settlers began to arrive in a fashion labelled 'progressive colonisation', an incredibly rapid process of transferring societal ideals and institutions from Europe to New Zealand (Belich in McCarthy 2007, 15). Despite agreements made between the Crown and indigenous Maori, Maori became increasingly marginalised in New Zealand as the settlers attempted to create a 'greater Britain' through a swift course of cultural reproduction (McCarthy 2007, *Ibid*). The aspiration to replicate the structures of Europe meant that traditional Maori structures were soon replaced with timber and masonry, and few outside of the intellectual and 'urban elite' were concerned with the preservation of the landscape (McLean 2000, 25).

Although the majority of settlers had little interest in intellectual debates many of the ideas that had become prevalent in Europe prior to the colonisation of New Zealand persisted, the interest in the conservation of history and heritage among them. This interest was a continuation of discussions that had been occurring throughout Britain during the late Victorian period, mainly focussing on the consideration of the ethics and principles of preservation. Among those concerned with the conservation of buildings was the Dunedin Edinburgh Society, which focussed on the 'preservation of old buildings or against their restoration in some modern barbaric method' (Adam in McLean 2000, 3). This was an emulation of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings which had been instituted in England in 1877 (McLean 2000, 26). Similar societies existed, such as the Wellington Scenery Preservation Society, whose major concern was the preservation of 'pa, battlegrounds, and spots having historical associations' (Adam in McLean 2000, 3). While these examples are based almost solely in particular regions of New Zealand, heritage preservation was occurring on a national scale prior to the turn of the century. By 1887 the national park system had been created, following the gifting of lands around the central volcanic mountains Ruapehu,

Tongariro, and Ngauruhoe to the Crown, and the preservation of Ship Cove, the historic spot where Captain Cook had rested and refitted his ships (McLean 2000, 26). The beginnings of heritage (natural and built) preservation can be understood as part of a wider dialogue, and while these places were considered valuable their preservation is also a part of New Zealand's journey towards maturity, distancing New Zealand from Europe, creating our own 'pioneer history' and establishing the New Zealand identity (Davidson 1990, 8).

It was not, however, until 1903 that the first site protection legislation was introduced. The *Scenery Preservation Act* provided for the retention of Crown Lands that were of historical as well as scenic interest and was managed by a small commission attached to the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts (Leach 1991).⁴ The Government of the time had obviously developed an understanding of the role that heritage conservation could have in New Zealand. There had for some time been an understanding that museums and exhibitions could shape social values, as seen at the 1865 New Zealand Exhibition, where the grandiose aspirations for New Zealand were put on display. This exhibition highlighted colonial values, exalted the frontier society, and indicated what a settler identity was intended to look like (McCarthy 2007, 16). In 1906 the *Scenery Preservation Act* was amended and the commission was replaced with a smaller group. This downsizing and replacement of the commission is regarded as a politically motivated decision that had a number of ramifications for heritage protection, particularly for Maori sites (Leach 1991).

The impact upon Maori heritage is highlighted by the bitter argument that broke out in 1916 between the Directors of the Dominion, Canterbury, Auckland, and Otago Museums. At the time it was common practice to collect and display Maori artefacts and structures in museums (McCarthy 2007, 35-6). However, the presentation of the idea to remove rock art from North Otago and South Canterbury caused what was one of the first debates in New Zealand over conservation *in situ*. R. Speight, curator of the Canterbury Museum stated in reaction that 'preservation in position and not removal is [...] the invariable practice in civilised countries where preservation is possible'

⁴ The Scenery Preservation Act was passed in addition to, but later in 1903, the Land Act 1892 which had permitted for lands to be retained specifically for scenic purposes, but was restricted in terms of acquiring privately owned land (Leach 1991).

(Speight 1916 in McLean 2000, 29). The criticism of the proposed removal continued with Speight and Dominion Museum director J.A. Thomson petitioning the government for increased protection. However, due to a wartime moratorium on non-urgent legislation and the drastic reduction of the Scenery Preservation Board's operations, the petitions went unheard. Thomson continued to publicise the preservation work that was being carried out in the United Kingdom, and in 1918 the Preservation Board agreed with Speight and Thomson, going on to define that 'in New Zealand, historical monuments would include aboriginal rock paintings, earthworks of Maori pas, Maori or Pre Maori stone fences, battle sites of the Maori Wars, redoubts, blockhouses and perhaps some buildings erected by early colonists' (Report of the Scenery Preservation Board 1918, 2). The interest in systematic site recording and preservation increased following this assertion, and as museums and historical societies became more involved, attention to sites of significance to Maori and early New Zealand gained momentum (McLean 2000, 29).

It took longer for the same attention to be turned to the preservation of European buildings and structures despite the early intentions of preservation societies (Adam in McLean, 3). That being said, in 1928 Parliament passed the first Act that provided for the statutory protection of built heritage – the *Canterbury Provincial Buildings Vesting Act* and its 1937 amendment gave legal protection to the Canterbury Provincial Chambers complex – returning the buildings to local control and having them maintained as a memorial (Lochhead 1998, 24).

The centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi marked an important transition, generating curiosity, attention, and interest in history and heritage places throughout the country. Keith Holyoake, as acting Minister for Internal Affairs stated that:

I think was only in 1939 and 1940, when we celebrated our national centennial [...] that many people in New Zealand for the first time became conscious that we really did have a history of our own [...] I think all too many of us had become used to saying that New Zealand was just a young country [...] The interest that was awakened led to a greater interest in places, monuments, and sites commemorating our history.

(Holyoake cited in *NZPD, 1954 Vol. 9, 553* in McLean 2000)

The centennial programme saw for the first time a concentrated undertaking to compile a list of historic places, objects, and important sites in all regions of New Zealand.

Local history projects increased exponentially (Olssen 1984) and public involvement in the movement towards the preservation of historic buildings became increasingly popular. As one Palmerston North newspaper commented: “there is a danger that in the midst of the public acclaim of the city’s marvellous advance, the community may disregard the part that buildings demolished [...] have played in the making of Palmerston North (Unidentified press clipping in McLean 2000, 32). Although there was a celebration of the modern throughout New Zealand, the destruction of popular and admired buildings such as Partington’s windmill in Auckland, and threats to others such as Old St Paul’s Cathedral in Wellington, led to a great amount of public unrest and the conditions for the creation of a “National Trust along the lines of that which has functioned so admirably in England” (McLean 2000, 32).

Agencies and Legislation: The New Zealand Historic Places Trust, the *Historic Places Act*, and the *Resource Management Act*

The *Historic Places Act* was first introduced to Parliament in 1952 and from the outset appeared to be a movement in a different direction to previous heritage legislation. The inclusion of sites of significance as well as buildings was not a new idea in New Zealand heritage, with sites having been recognised by scenery preservation groups since the 1880s, but its presence on a piece of legislation that already had remarkable community and political support would advance heritage management in a way few other proceedings could. The Bill’s creator Duncan Rae stated during its second reading that it was needed to ‘mobilise local and national interest in identifying, retaining, and suitably marking [...] the various sites of buildings, institutions, battlegrounds, Maori pa, and other places of interest’.⁵ With many aspects drawn from the UK’s National Trust, the *Historic Places Act* 1953 brought into being the National Historic Places Trust (after 1963 this would become the New Zealand Historic Places Trust). The Trust initially had a strong library, local history, and museum emphasis with its priorities focussed upon survey, marking, publication, and record keeping across seventeen regional committees. The Trust’s core activities divided into three main responsibilities: property ownership, the identification and assessment of heritage places for registration and classification, and regulatory functions particularly related to archaeology. During

⁵‘Constitution of the Trust’, from An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, accessed March 2012, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/new-zealand-historic-places-trust/page-2>

the 1960s and 1970s the Trust acquired a range of properties where previously it had been the preferred option to provide funding to private owners of important buildings, but the 1968 Annual report states “circumstances have encouraged a trend away from the latter practice in favour of outright acquisition or control” (NZHPT Minutes, 1968, 4). The conservation and restoration work that they were able to do, however, continually suffered from a lack of funding, leading to a moratorium on purchases in the 1980s, the adaptive re-use of a number of heritage listed properties, and the resale of properties (McLean 2000, 36).

The Trust’s process for the identification and assessment went through a number of changes due mainly to disagreement over how to classify buildings and sites for registration. In 1971 the Trust’s board established the Buildings Classification Committee in the hope that a concentrated effort would help the Trust to obtain protective legislation for the buildings that had been classified in the top two rankings of the system, A or B. It was noted at the time that ‘the A and B classifications must be carefully and jealously assigned if they are to achieve ultimate acceptance’ (BCC Paper HP 19/1977, HP 12001-009). The 1980 version of the Act dictated a change in focus, with more stringent criteria being applied to A and B classifications. Due to these changes more and more buildings that did not fall into the A or B category were overlooked and a focus upon researching buildings that were under immediate threat was initiated (BCC Minutes, 1-5 August 1986). In 1989 the Trust came under review with the intention that any changes would be in line with *the Resource Management Act* proposed for 1991. The review proposed that the Trust should become the leader in the identification and assessment of heritage with local authorities taking charge of protection through the proposed *Resource Management Act*, and that the old classification system should be replaced with a two category system. The pressure to make these changes, together with the lack of funding to do so, caused the Trust to be overwhelmed, impacting negatively on the process of comprehensive survey for classification and Trust involvement in the field.

The NZHPT primarily manage heritage through a legal framework made up of the *Historic Places Act* 1993 (henceforth HPA) and the *Resource Management Act* 1991 (henceforth RMA). These two pieces of legislation are used in conjunction with a set of significance criteria to which heritage is compared and assessed. The primary purpose

of the HPA ‘is to promote the identification, protection, preservation, and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand’ (HPA 1993, 10). It specifies four major types of historic heritage – historic places, historic areas, wahi tapu, and wahi tapu areas, as well as outlining a set of ten criteria for assessment. The HPA recognises the unique, intangible connection that Maori have with wahi tapu and taonga and their ancestral lands, water, and other sites, although it does not specifically reference the Treaty of Waitangi (HPA 1993 Part 4, Section 2C). All archaeological sites are protected under the HPA regardless of whether or not they are registered with the Trust. The HPA also put in place the Historic Places Register (henceforth the Register) which is New Zealand’s only statutory register. Although archaeological sites are awarded protection under the HPA, historic places are not and, despite popular belief, the inclusion of heritage on the Register does not confer any protection to the site or area; this is achieved through inclusion on district plans, or the enforcement of heritage orders through the Resource Management Act (Donaghey 2008, 45).

The RMA was a replacement of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1977*. The RMA transferred the emphasis from the regulation of land use and planning, to the evaluation of the environment and the effects that changes may have, and rather than decision-making being site and discipline specific, a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach was preferred (McLean 2000, 43). These changes may have been a reaction to the fact that under the *Town and Country Planning Act 1977* local authorities were responsible for creating awareness around local heritage, but there was a severe lack of co-ordination between different regions and levels of protection were thus decided upon ‘at the whim of the local authority in question’ (Kelly 2000, 122). So while the intention of the legislation was to place protective powers in the hands of local authorities, the focus of the RMA itself shifted from an emphasis on heritage protection to concentrating on the sustainable management of resources.

The RMA states that local authorities must provide for matters of national significance, but only need to consider or have a particular regard for other matters. As such, non-Maori heritage in particular is often deemed not to be of national significance and while Maori heritage is listed as nationally significant, the protection of places is often relegated to the category of ‘other matters’ thus giving local authorities the discretion to do little or nothing for heritage (Allen 1998, 14). The RMA, however, has one of the

widest definitions for heritage protection of any of the major legislations. As a result, responses to the Act have been mixed, with a 1996 report from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment stating that: “heritage protection for many places is not being achieved. The permanent loss of many historic and cultural sites and places is causing widespread anxiety and is most acute amongst Tangata Whenua” (PCE 1996, iii). The same report recommended making sites, buildings, places, and areas under the RMA matters of national importance in order to address popular anxieties, as well as consolidating the management of Crown owned historic places, improving funding for both privately and publicly owned heritage, and for a new unit of government to advise on historic and cultural heritage (McLean 2000, 43). Amendments to the RMA have attempted to elevate heritage to a matter of national importance, afford greater weight to the protection of Maori heritage, and transfer the regulation and protection from the HPA to the RMA, however the progress represented by these amendments, remain, fragile (Allen, 1998).

There is little consistency to be found between these two pieces of legislation despite the fact that they were designed to be complementary, with the HPA providing for the identification and assessment of heritage and the RMA providing for its protection. The disparate nature of legislation has led to a number of issues and concerns not only for the effective assessment of heritage, but for its protection and management as there are few effective linkages between the two.

Agencies and Legislation: The Department of Conservation and the *Conservation Act 1987*

Under the *Conservation Act 1987* (henceforth CA), DOC was established to administer the conservation estate. The estate covers almost a third of New Zealand’s land area, which had previously been the responsibility of the Department of Lands and Survey and the Forest Service. The CA provided a route for central government to influence historic heritage management, and prior to the 2000 repeal of Schedule 1 of the CA, it had been the responsibility of DOC to administer the *Historic Places Act* (Vossler 2000, 62). In 1995 the Department of Conservation published its ‘Historic Heritage Strategy’ defining its priorities in regard to historic heritage, stating that its management would focus upon places on the conservation estate and supporting the NZHPT on ‘off-estate’ matters. This direction was not met with support and a

subsequent PCE inquiry into historic and cultural heritage management noted that DOC was not performing its role appropriately and ‘even on the conservation estate, intense competition for funding is hampering DOC’s progress with integrated heritage management’ (PCE 1996, 34).

In 1997 the Minister of Conservation began a review of what should be defined as historic heritage, but this failed to do little more than reprise what had been stated earlier in the 1996 PCE report, simply excluding the considerations on movable cultural property. The Minister’s Advisory Committee also recommended a Crown-protected schedule of nationally significant heritage and a reaffirmation of the RMA as a primary tool for the protection of heritage; however, these recommendations were undercut by the change of Government and the subsequent recommendation of diminishing cultural considerations from the RMA (McLean 2000, 43). Subsequently the administration and lead policy role played by the Department of Conservation have been reassigned to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, created as an outcome of the 1996 Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment report (McLean 2000, 44).

DOC manage historic heritage on public conservation land with the objective ‘to manage for conservation purposes, all land, and all other natural and historic resources’ (CA 1987 Part 2, s. 6 (a)) and ‘to promote the benefits to present and future generations of – (i) the conservation of natural and historic resources generally and the natural and historic resources of New Zealand in particular’ (CA 1987 Part 2, s. 6 (c, i)). The CA, unlike the HPA, acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. However, the CA, unlike the HPA, does not provide a criteria or a specific set of tools with which historic heritage should be assessed.

DOC instead carries out Heritage Assessments (henceforth HAs) to establish the significance of heritage under their management. These documents represent the minimum standard for safeguarding the history and establishing the value of the historic resources that are currently under active management. The DOC Statement of Intent 2012-17 (henceforth SOI) declares that one of the ways in which it demonstrates its success is through the completion and publication of heritage assessments (DOC Statement of Intent 2012-2017, 24).

The HA as a document is relatively straightforward, following a template made up of:

1. Site overview
2. Descriptions
 - History description
 - Fabric description
 - Cultural connections
3. Significance
 - Historic significance
 - Fabric significance
 - Cultural significance
4. National context
5. Management recommendations
6. Identification of sources

Much like the NZHPT, DOC HAs compile information from three categories in order to assess heritage, as outlined by the SOI: (1) Stories (the history of a site), (2) Physical/fabric (the physical substance of a site), and (3) Cultural (how society interacts with a site). These descriptions are used to assess and determine the value and significance of a historic resource. Although value and significance are relied upon to describe historic heritage, they are not emphasised in New Zealand legislation.

It has been asserted that heritage protection must be based upon a systematic and defensible assessment process (Donaghey 2008, 45) so it is appropriate to look at current heritage assessment to gauge how successfully the DOC framework is meeting this ideal. If the outcome of HAs is to ensure that '*our history is protected and brought to life*' (DOC Statement of Intent 2012-2017, 21) there are a number of questions that need to be raised about the process. It is apparent that operational procedures need to be rigorous and well-structured in order to be effective, but there is little guidance provided on the HA as a document for practice. Assessments are based around a set of criteria, which are descended from legislation, however the legislation – whether it be the HPA, the RMA, or the CA – does not provide any practical basis for assessing heritage and there exist no common definitions in major heritage related legislation. The place-based approach that DOC takes in HAs is also worthy of further investigation, for despite the fact that the CA does provide for place based management, the focus on 'stories, fabric, and culture' can be seen as not fully

reflecting the nature and qualities of heritage, and thus, the assessment framework may not either.

As was pointed out in the preceding literature review, heritage assessment is an active process in which heritage managers give a present day meaning to the past – meaning that values are not static and should change as understanding does. However, as shown in the table below, the total number of ‘key’ or actively managed sites at DOC is 566, and as at 2013, 199 of these sites have current HAs.

	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2016– 2017
Total key sites including Icon sites where heritage assessment reports have been completed Total number of key sites: 566	189	199	242	566
Total Icon sites with heritage assessments Total number of Icon sites: 20	1	20	20	20
Total key sites where the stories have been published on the internet	12	31	71	566
Total Icon sites where stories have been published on the internet	1	20	20	20

Figure 1. The Number of Key Historic Sites Where Heritage Assessment Reports Have Been Completed (DOC Statement of Intent 2012-2017, 24).

What the table also shows is a projection for the next four to five years in terms of heritage assessments being completed. This raises an interesting paradigmatic issue in context of HAs – currently, once completed the HA for a site appears to be ‘ticked off’ as being completed, and once approved the status of the HA will remain the same, their production coming to an end when 100% have been completed (which is more clearly displayed by the DOC Icon site listings). This goes against the idea that assessment should be a dynamic process, with HAs reacting to the current heritage *zeitgeist* and as such should only be relied upon as accurate for a limited time. In terms of this research,

what it makes clear is that the approach to heritage assessment as carried out at DOC is in need of critical examination if these documents are to be used in the sustainable and appropriate management of historic heritage.

Conclusion

The intention of this chapter was to provide an overview of the development of New Zealand historic heritage management, outline the major agencies and governing legislations, and to provide a summary of the DOC Heritage Assessment framework. What has become clear is that the history of heritage management in New Zealand has contributed greatly to the current situation that DOC is in, mandated to assess and protect heritage, but lacking guidance. The disparate nature of New Zealand legislation has raised a number of legitimate concerns over the way in which DOC assesses historic heritage, primarily the lack of definitions and the effect that this has on the assessment process, the lack of guidance for assigning significance and value, and whether or not a document that is completed and then filed away is an effective and appropriate tool for practice. There are a number of other inherent issues identified in this chapter that deserve further exploration, in particular whether the lack of definitions around value and significance have an effect upon the heritage assessment process, and whether DOC assessments are effective for a wide range of heritage types. Further to these questions that are based almost solely upon *content* of the HA, is the HA framework and whether or not in its current format it is effective as a framework for heritage assessment.

The next chapter now moves on to consider the analysis and discussion of the material that was collected through a series of interviews with DOC heritage managers for this dissertation. Chapter Two contains an examination of current heritage assessment practice at DOC and considers the first of my central research questions – *What is the state of current heritage assessment at the Department of Conservation?*

Chapter Two

“Muddy Boot Heritage Professionals”:

An examination of current heritage assessment practice at the Department of Conservation

Introduction

This chapter examines the first major theme identified in the analysis of the interview material, which relates specifically to current heritage assessment and management practice at DOC. It focuses upon the strengths and weaknesses of the current heritage assessment framework, and general issues in heritage practice that affect heritage assessment and management. The following chapter (Chapter Three) will present the second part of the findings, which look at future practice at DOC, and relate to the form that heritage assessment could take in the future, the role of DOC, and the influence that further engagement with critical or academic theory could have. The key themes that are discussed explore the central research questions of this dissertation – *What is the state of current heritage assessment at the Department of Conservation* and *What place and form should heritage assessment have and take in future practice at the Department of Conservation*.

It is important to note that in the analysis of the interview material a number of sub-themes were identified in the data, many of which were closely interconnected and as themes were quite often able to be placed into a number of different categories. The key sub-themes that will be discussed in this chapter are identified as: ‘Heritage in practice – Heritage Assessment’ and ‘Heritage in practice – Bureaucracy’.

Heritage in practice – Heritage Assessment:

Definitions

This section contains an examination of the material that emerged from the interviews into the definitions that are used at DOC to understand and assess historic heritage. Already well-established in the literature of current heritage studies, it became clear in the interviews that definitions are closely related to the way in which historic heritage is understood and interpreted, making it an important element of current heritage assessment practice. Generally there was a consensus among respondents that heritage

assessments are an important element of heritage management practice at DOC. However, there were shifts in the opinions of the current system between the interviewees, largely based on background, current positions, and personal concerns, which each had an effect upon their professional opinions. Some respondents had thought about the topics of heritage assessment and current practice extensively and had a thorough understanding of many of the issues prior to the interviews. Most agreed, as articulated by Historic Ranger (henceforth HR) Andrew, that “New Zealand does some things very well and it does some things, probably, appallingly”. The idea that DOC should be active in its support of historic heritage and its place as a valuable resource was an important concept for all respondents, and there was an emphasis upon not only interpreting and understanding heritage places, but preserving them for the future.

Visitor and Historic Ranger (henceforth HR) Maria states: “historic heritage as an ideal [...] has a lot of different definitions [...] but that kind-of a definition would not work very well in practice, when you’re actually out there and managing historic resources”. This is an issue that has been recognised in heritage studies before; that the lack of basic and practice focussed definitions makes it incredibly difficult for heritage management on the ground to be clear about what it is to perform (Warren-Findlay 2001, 40). Within DOC, there is not one way to understand heritage in definition, making it incredibly difficult for any standardisation of heritage assessment to occur – the assignment of value and significance to heritage is extremely closely tied into the definitions used and the way in which heritage is then managed and maintained. In New Zealand it is evident that there are a range of concepts that inform various approaches to understanding heritage with each making a valuable contribution to the way in which the assessment of heritage is carried out. In the analysis of the interviews, there was an overall consensus of the major elements of the definition of historic heritage with each respondent discussing ‘significance’ and ‘value’ as important features in the way in which they understand and assess heritage.

The concepts of significance and value do not only affect heritage in a theoretical way. There is extensive literature on the idea of values, mostly tailored to answering the questions of ‘which values’ and ‘whose values’ (Aplin 2002). Even though the concept of ‘value’ is not a new one in heritage, the role that value as a concept plays in the

practice of heritage assessment and wider heritage management is not explicit. It is clear that heritage value underpins heritage management and assessment, and the value that can be assigned to heritage is a key concern of current heritage practice. What has emerged from the interviews is that in practice, the assignation of value is incredibly difficult because there are so many different ways to measure value and significance. As poignantly expressed by HR Andrew, in order to understand and discuss historic heritage “it probably depends a little bit on whether you are asking me from a personal standpoint, or from the Department standpoint, or from a legal standpoint as they all have a slightly different definition”.

Most of the interviewees noted that the DOC definition for managing historic heritage is tied into three key elements – fabric, stories, and culture – as well as the idea of heritage having an action to it, a passing on of things or places of value. This definition causes conflict in practice because it results in bias in the way in which heritage places are assessed. There is an emphasis placed upon heritage that has a visible or physical appeal, has a historical story, and has a cultural connection as being of more value. This is not restricted to DOC, a prejudice is visible in the NZHPT Register as well that favours built heritage over subsurface or archaeological sites. As a heritage agency, DOC is responsible for an extremely broad range of heritage, from middens to lighthouses, but for practice, the definitions that are used in the assessment of heritage are often at odds with the heritage that they are trying to assign a value to.

As a component of heritage practice, the contention that can be seen over the definitions that are used in the assessment of heritage is an on-going issue, there is a need for further examination of the definition used to assess heritage in New Zealand; this does not necessarily mean that more archaeological sites should be receiving active management or that some built heritage should be removed from the list of actively managed sites, but simply that the way in which value is assigned could be improved. It is difficult to bridge the divide between the archaeological record and the built environment because in terms of definition and legislation they are interpreted in similar ways despite their differences. For current heritage assessment practice, there needs to be a way to determine if the significance or value that is being assigned to each is equivalent. As HR Maria states “I think the way that we assess sites, like if it’s a Pa

site... it's always going to be seen as more important than, let's say, a really important midden or something”.

It is apparent that the ascription of value is absolutely critical in a heritage assessment, and that the assigned value is central to understanding the characteristics of a place that are considered to be of more importance. One element of value identified through the interviews is that, in the practical world of heritage management, the definition of heritage and the assignment of significance have become increasingly connected with economics. In the current governmental environment there is increased pressure placed upon public services, like DOC, to provide ‘transparency’ and ‘accountability’ which has, in turn, placed pressure upon staff to compromise personal or academic views in order to fit within the constraints of law or policy. Historic Technical Advisor (henceforth HTA) Richard further specifies there might be “the best way of doing something in terms of a heritage management point of view, and then there's the realistic thing”. The argument that HTA Richard makes here is between what arguably would be the ideal outcome and what resources and funding allow heritage managers to accomplish.

There is increased discussion on the assigned value of the past as a resource as it is defined by potential economic worth. Again as discussed by HTA Richard, “when you have limited funding and people are saying ‘well why are we managing this place [...] no-one goes there, or very few people go there’ then you know it's quite a compelling argument. In my mind it doesn't mean that it's less significant.” The emphasis upon the value of heritage places being dependent upon visitation is an issue as it places heritage materials at the centre of the debate on accountability. That heritage managers need to assess heritage places for value, and select in favour of managing some at the expense of others is understood and necessary – but it should be the assessment process and the operation of it that should be accountable, the material that is being managed, however, should not.

The assignation of ‘value’ and the Western institutionalised assertion that ‘heritage is a contemporary function selecting from the past, for transmission to the future’ (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, 268), suggests that valuable heritage should be able to be passed onto future generations. This was another element of the discussion of heritage definitions that has an effect upon heritage assessment practice at DOC that

became apparent in the interviews. Several of the respondents noted that the DOC definition of historic heritage has a strong emphasis upon 'the next generation', which leads to the issue that in the present, in an extremely resource constrained environment, a significant amount of work is being done to preserve the fabric, the stories, and the culture of heritage places, in the hope that people in the future will have an interest in it. The implication of this, 'if we preserve it future generations will be interested' idea, is that, as Historic Technical Advisor (henceforth HTA) Paul states: "the next generation, the important thing in this model, is that they're not in the future, they're here now." Under this paradigm, the point at which the value of the work being carried out by heritage managers is projected into the future rather than being apparent in the current environment. This is an issue that is mirrored in current museological practice; that museums should collect critically because the selections that they make have numerous implications for the future of collections overall. To date, however, the reflexivity that is beginning to be seen in museum practice and that was seen in archaeology between the 1970s and 1990s (Trigger 1989) has yet to find its way into heritage management overall.

A major conclusion in the analysis of the theme of definitions is that the lack of any common definition in policy and legislation impacts greatly on the practice of heritage management and heritage assessment. Respondents stated that the assessment process is not as responsive to all elements of heritage, in particular the intangible aspects. Presently there is a focus upon physical fabric, understandably due to the fact that built heritage in particular is much more under threat from decay or demolition, but this focus on fabric and physical significance rather than concepts of social value and cultural significance does mean that the understandings expressed by indigenous or community groups are at risk of being overlooked. The definitions that are applied to objects, sites, or landscapes of significance to Maori are as ill-defined as any other in New Zealand heritage which is a major source of dissonance in heritage management and has a huge impact upon heritage assessment practice. Donaghey (2008, 51) noted that "the standard management approach is for a public body to protect, on behalf of the entire population, a small number of places selected by experts. By contrast, Maori stress the importance of cultural places chosen by local communities". The reality of managing and assessing Maori heritage in New Zealand is that indigenous understanding of wahi tapu, wahi tapu areas, or taonga, are significantly different to the

way that heritage is assessed in legislation or policy, and as HR Andrew states “by creating a piece of legislation where...they didn’t understand historic heritage on the ground they didn’t understand the cultural issues on the ground, all they have done is confuse the issue for everyone”. The challenge is that there is a divide between those who are writing legislation and thus definitions for management, those who carry out heritage assessment and management on the ground, and the communities to which that heritage belongs.

Heritage in practice – Heritage Assessment:

Strengths and Weaknesses

It is well accepted that one of the major functions of a heritage management agency is the evaluation and assessment of historic heritage, and that the value of a heritage place is usually determined by assessment against a set of criteria which reflect these values (Lennon 1998). One of the key sub themes that were found as an element of heritage in practice was that the current heritage assessment practice at DOC possesses a number of strengths and weaknesses. The strengths and weaknesses identified are in relation not only to questions about the way in which heritage is assessed at DOC, but also about whether or not the product of a heritage assessment, i.e. the actual report, represents a useful document for management, and whether decisions for funding or further management could be based on current heritage assessment protocols. These references focussed mainly upon the usefulness of the document and the quality of the assessments. What became clear in the analysis is that the DOC heritage assessment template (as outlined in Chapter One) is, as HTA Paul states, “quite a powerful template”. The process for carrying out a heritage assessment is relatively straightforward. It asks for a statement of significance and the identification of values as a major element of the assessment. The statement of significance is crucial to the assessment process and an absolutely fundamental element for further heritage management – by identifying what is the most relevant value of a place it can make most important elements of a place or site are.

The weakness is that statements of significance at DOC in current heritage assessments vary extremely widely and many do not allow for any comparison to be made. Statements of value and significance are relative and are best when used as comparative

terms. The HAs for Ruapekapeka Pa,⁶ Taumatawhana Pa,⁷ and Tiritiri Matangi Archaeological and Historic landscape,⁸ argue for the significance of the sites, making the values clear and concise. For example, the fabric significance from the Taumatawhana Pa HA states that:

Taumatawhana is a rare example of a double pa. The pa is also one of the few examples of a ‘sand pa’, the only others recorded being Muiata Pa, two others in the Motutangi swamp south of Pukenui, and another near the Waipu River south of Whangarei.

This example makes a clear claim and argues its case for the value of this place in relation to others of a similar nature, although it does not state the importance of the heritage type (no statement is made on what is important about the fact that this is an example of a ‘sand pa’). Others are not as successful, for example the fabric significance found in the HA for the Motuihe Quarantine Station and HMNZS *Tamaki*,⁹ does not make a clear statement of the value:

The olive grove contains some of the earliest olives planted in New Zealand, most likely from some of Logan Campbell’s early introduction of the plant in the 1870s.

While this statement makes a case that the olive grove may be one of the oldest in New Zealand, it provides no context or comparison to other sites where olives (or any fruit trees) may have been introduced. The statement of significance should act as a well thought out summary of the heritage values that can be attributed to a heritage place or site, thus justifying active management or funding. The significance statement needs to make a case for the value that is being attributed and argue for those values. The problem that is encountered at DOC is that, as HTA Richard asserts “from a heritage assessment, specifically the main point [...] is the whole significance criteria”. DOC heritage assessments require a statement of historic, fabric, and cultural significance and the strength of these significance statements is that they act as a summary of the heritage values applied to a place or site. But as mentioned in the previous section on definitions, values are an extremely variable element of the heritage assessment

⁶ Maria Butcher, ‘*Heritage Assessment: Ruapekapeka Pa and Battlefield*’, Department of Conservation, 2011.

⁷ Jonathan Carpenter, ‘*Heritage Assessment: Taumatawhana Pa*’, Geometria Ltd., 2012.

⁸ Andy Dodd, ‘*Heritage Assessment: Tiritiri Matangi Archaeological and Historic landscape*’, Department of Conservation, 2008.

⁹ Andy Dodd, ‘*Heritage Assessment: Motuihe Quarantine Station and HMNZS Tamaki*’, Department of Conservation, 2008.

process. The fact that values are dynamic adds an interesting epistemological facet unto this discussion. As HTA Paul goes on to identify in detail:

“You’re not measuring a scientific entity, like temperature or distance, it’s something we have invented because it is useful and, so history and fabric significance are measurement systems constructed by heritage professionals. And they’re constructed for a good reason, because it enables us to do relative assessment of values”.

The attempt to assign competing values to a heritage site has led to the confusion that exists currently. The varying approaches that are taken and the execution of the heritage assessment, in many cases, make the statement of significance less useful than it could be. HTA Paul states that often those carrying out a heritage assessment will continue applying “more categories...so you start to find that you’re repeating stuff... it’s a bit like in maths or algebra, you have an x, a y, and a z axis and theoretically you can model in five dimensions, but for working purposes you only have three. I think that heritage work could be a bit more like that”. What HTA Paul identifies here is mirrored in wider heritage studies, particularly by Smith (2006) and Aplin (2002) in their discussion of heritage value.

The practice of identifying heritage values with which to then create a statement of significance as a part of a heritage assessment is extremely subjective. Value statements should not be viewed as finite, and regular reassessment of these values should be occurring as new information comes to light, as best practice models should develop in terms of their paradigm. This is not to say that the more value statements a heritage assessment contains the better, as in most cases, as discussed by HTA Paul, the lack of critical assessment of the values that have been applied to a heritage site or place is more of a hindrance for management, “a lot of heritage assessments will come up with 10 or 15 value statements [...] and people want to put something for each one...you can take a lot of angles [...] and it will end up doubling up”. In adding more value categories, it is clear that the analysis of a heritage place or site becomes more obscured and much less useful for heritage management practice.

The nature of values as identified by the respondents affects current heritage assessment practice, as can be seen with the lack of formal definitions for understanding different types of heritage, it was suggested by respondents that the current assessment procedure has led to the sites that DOC manage being

unrepresentative of the overall nature of New Zealand heritage. It must be asserted that because DOC manages the public conservation estate, as an agency it differs from others because it does not have many choices about what to manage. This emphasis upon, what HR Maria calls “sites with visible appeal” is not an issue isolated to DOC. It is also seen at the NZHPT as the assessment criteria for registration, similarly to DOC’s, has developed from architectural and historical disciplines. HTA Paul states that the imbalance seen is because, in terms of heritage assessment, “quite possibly architects were the first to get onto it...and that’s why the Register is full of churches and banks”. As was stated in the literature review, heritage managers must look at various types of heritage – objects, buildings, archaeology – and assign values to them to determine where on the spectrum of value that it fits. It appears, therefore, that it is not the subjective/objective paradigm that is changing over time, but the values of those who are carrying out the assessments.

DOC heritage assessments surveyed did show an emphasis upon built heritage, but unlike the issue identified by Donaghey (2008) at the NZHPT, that there was a bias towards heritage that was seen as nationally, rather than locally or regionally, significant almost the opposite problem can be seen at DOC, where there is little indication of how sites fit into a *national* scope. Further to this there is an under-representation of certain types of sites, as HR Andrew notes “the majority of heritage in this country, it’s not European”. The DOC icon sites list, which are all sites understood to be of national significance, is made up of 20 sites around New Zealand, and of these 5 are sites of significance to Maori while the remainder are colonial or historical heritage sites (there is an argument to be made that several others are of combined importance). While it is asserted that DOC should manage a representative sample of New Zealand heritage types, it is difficult to gain funding to carry out research that is not directly related to DOC’s mandate; however, the way to address this is not clear. Representativeness needs to be addressed in order to move forward on the issue of bias in heritage management and assessment practice.

In New Zealand there are thousands of archaeological sites, Wahi Tapu, and other significant sites, but they are not fully understood despite the information that they could provide about early New Zealand. The problem that can be seen here though, is as related to the current government and the divide between heritage agencies, as it is to

the divide between the public and non-Maori value of heritage and the often extremely specific and personal value that sites have to Maori, and it is extremely difficult to get a read on the national context of historic sites because of the assessments that are currently carried out. HR Andrew asserts that assessments “differ between areas, let alone conservancies and national... and that’s different again from what HPT want... and different again to what you have to do to get it as a site of significance on a district plan”. One of the key issues identified is the fact that, as Kerr states “legislative criteria of significance usually do not provide a practical basis for assessment” (1996, 11). This can be argued to be the case at DOC, where inconsistencies of this kind continue to cause problems for assessment practice.

Further to the issue identified by Kerr (1996, 11) and HR Andrew, each of the respondents argued that some of the weaknesses seen in current heritage assessment practice are more related to the qualities of the finished product rather than the framework for assessment itself. What became apparent in the analysis is that, in terms of heritage assessment, while there is a relatively straightforward process there is also a lack of standardisation on what should be included in the heritage assessment, what form the assessment should take, and what the outcomes should be. HR Andrew asserted that he was still waiting “for someone to actually give me a definition and a framework for a cultural heritage assessment, because [currently] there isn’t one, there’s six or seven or eight or ten, or whatever depending on who you talk to”. The challenge presented by having different systems for heritage assessment is that it is much more difficult to gain an idea of the national or even the regional scope of heritage types, which in turn decreases the amount of information that is accessible overall for New Zealand heritage. As DOC is responsible for ‘bringing heritage to life’, as stated in its Statement of Intent,¹⁰ having a more constant and integrated system for heritage assessment could be incredibly useful and would potentially be a way to address some of the inconsistencies seen in the significance statements and assessments of value. If sites could be placed within a framework of similar sites it would be much easier to assign significance and value by comparison.

¹⁰Department of Conservation, ‘*Statement of Intent 2012-2017*’, accessed May 2013, <http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/about-doc/statement-of-intent-2012-2017/>

The findings of this research suggest that there are mixed feelings on the current assessment process, and there were a variety of options for improving the process discussed (which will be covered in Chapter Three). The respondents agreed that the current process is inconsistently applied, with HTA Paul stating that HAs are “extremely variable.” Consistency throughout all parts of the process is something that all respondents identified as being extremely important for current practice and a main concern for the future. While the core criterion of the heritage assessment is straightforward, the process is variable between different areas and largely uncoordinated. These two issues combined significantly reduce the usefulness of the heritage assessment as a document for management purposes. There are a number of inconsistencies throughout the evaluation and assessment process, there is a lack of guidance on the criteria that is used to assess significance and value, which is tied into the lack of an explicit definition, and little overall strategy for the assessment of places of archaeological, historic, and Maori significance, but the current DOC process does provide a robust basis for heritage assessment to be carried out. HTA Paul considers that the heritage assessment framework is valuable because it “asks you to do a comparative analysis to support your claims...it asks you to do a review of your sources...and then...peer review”. An effective HA will contain each of these elements. Of these three elements, the comparative analysis and peer review were two that were discussed in most detail in the interviews, review of sources much less so.

In terms of comparative analysis HR Andrew considers that a comparative analysis is an integral element of any HA, because “if you haven’t defined your site properly, which is where you should be starting to do that comparison...you’ve missed the boat anyway”. Each of the respondents indicated that comparative analysis is difficult, particularly in terms of national comparisons, but that it is a worthwhile element of the process. In the data collection for this dissertation, documentary research was undertaken of heritage assessments from the past decade. The examination that was carried out on published heritage assessments supported the statements that respondents had made on comparative assessment. The HA template (as outlined in Chapter One) contains a section for ‘national context’ of a site to be established. This should be where an element of comparison is discussed, and where the site is placed within a national scope – it should refer to the national relevance of the site compared to other sites of a similar nature. However, there is little guidance supplied around this section

and the products range from good examples of where a site may fit into the national scope,¹¹ via general historical overviews and the situations leading to the establishment of the site,¹² to not being included at all.¹³

The DOC HA system does not include an element of ranking (although it is recognised that the CA links to the HPA, so a basic level of ranking can be inferred from this) unlike other New Zealand registers of historic places, and there has been little movement towards implementing regional or contextual studies despite research having been conducted into this area (see Clayworth, *Historic Heritage Thematic Frameworks: Their use as tools for management and interpretation*, 2008) and a movement towards comparative analysis as a basis for heritage management (e.g. Challis 1991). However, there currently is a project underway at DOC that is assessing and developing a framework for heritage value attribution in order to generate a Historic management portfolio. The application of such comparative studies would have a number of advantages over the current system, allowing for the regional and national picture to be seen while also indicating local distinctions, for comparative assessments to be carried out for similar/related heritage instead of the ‘one offs’ that are currently carried out, and it would be a more fitting way to manage the thousands of archaeological sites that DOC are responsible for, particularly by assisting with carrying out regional and national contextual studies.¹⁴

Peer review is one of the areas of the current HA process that was identified as being extremely important in order to make the HA document more useful for practice, but two respondents discussed the same issue found with peer review – that it is either not being carried out at all, or that they are being reviewed by people who are unsuitable, or whose suitability is at least debateable. As HTA Paul states:

You’re meant to get a person who’s a subject expert [...] people are largely dodging that. They either dodge the peer review or are getting people that

¹¹ Alan Macrae, *Heritage Assessment: Mangonui Courthouse Historic Reserve*, Department of Conservation, 2010.

¹² Melina Goddard and Christen McAlpine, *Heritage Assessment: Cape Brett Lighthouse and Settlement Historic Reserve*, Department of Conservation, 2011.

¹³ Maria Butcher, *Heritage Assessment: Ruapekapeka Pa and Battlefield*, Department of Conservation, 2011.

¹⁴ This is currently lacking in the New Zealand context, with national studies of archaeology being extremely limited. Some general examples for Maori Pa and Maori archaeological landscapes include: Davidson 1982, 1984; Irwin 1985; Sutton 1991, 1993; Sutton, Furey and Marshall 2004.

are unsuitable [...]. You should almost get the person who will challenge you most to do the peer review, but they're finding people who won't challenge them.

The benefit of having a HA peer reviewed is that the assessment technique that has been used to assess the site or place for significance is being itself evaluated and the criteria that have been used to assign values are being examined and thus, justified. HR Andrew made it clear that the peer review process for heritage assessments, irrespective of the documents themselves, is quite a difficult process because they need to be:

Really really rigorously peer reviewed by someone who understands the framework within which they've been asked to write. And that's quite tricky, because they're usually written by muddy boot heritage professionals, not academics. But it's academics who are being asked to peer review them. Or its other muddy boot heritage professionals who are being asked to peer review them, and they don't have the academic background. I think that you should be bringing international experts to see if it's a site of significance [...] If you're using international examples why wouldn't you use international peer reviewers? If you're only using national ones [examples] then great use national ones [reviewers]".

HR Andrew here raises an interesting problem – if the argument for a value statement were well supported and well developed it should be convincing no matter the background of the person who is reviewing it. Nevertheless, increased attention to the peer review process would help to promote standardisation and consistency in the HAs and would help to better reflect best practice.

Similarly to the problems of consistency for workability and management is another element identified in the analysis of the interview material - that where ambiguity could be seen in the application of the current heritage assessment template or process, the documents are seen as also being limited in the information that they provide, particularly for day to day management and as the basis for investment decisions. The major weakness of the heritage assessment document in this case is that when asked if heritage assessments were a document that provided information that was useful for management, all respondents had similar answers, as articulated here by HR Maria:

I think that the good ones do [...] they can be quite useful in providing [information] to other people or Department staff. I think that they are, in some ways, quite useful for that process, but they don't provide a sort of comprehensive approach that focusses strictly on archaeological values or historic values, it's more of an overview sort of thing.

The caveat in respondents answers was that while the HA document is seen as useful to staff, the issue of inconsistency and ambiguity remains the crux of the issue. The heritage assessment is designed to fit into a series of procedures for management. As described by HTA Paul, “there’s the heritage assessment, there’s what we call our work plans, so that’s the detailed specification of the work that you’re going to. Then the third step is, for want of a better description, on site work controls”. So while the document is useful as an element of the process, as a stand-alone document it is possibly less useful than more comprehensive documents such as conservation plans which include management recommendations as an element of the document and an inventory of the heritage values. The HA is, at its core, a resource that is designed to make clear what the value and significance of a heritage place or site is, but HTA Paul identifies again where they are not meeting this need, saying that “people call them heritage assessments but then don’t make value statements in them [...] a value statement has to be a claim [...] it’s the first, or the most influential, or the biggest, or regarded by architects as outstanding [...] what drives this place overall?”

The Conservation Plan (henceforth CP), on the other hand, seeks to understand the significance of a place so that it may guide its development into the future, seeking to retain, reinforce, and reveal all aspects of a place’s significance and mapping out the values that are associated with it. A CP must be scholarly, yet be prepared in a commercial context and relying on finite resources, it must develop policy based on an understanding of the place. These policies must be persuasive as well as practicable, and the objective of the plan must clear (Kerr 2008, 321-322). Current HAs, while not designed to be as comprehensive as a CP, appear to have been designed with a number of the same principles in mind, particularly in terms of values statements. But respondents assert that as the source of information they are not living up to this expectation, as HTA Paul states “many heritage assessments don’t map through to the ‘so what’ [...] they lack comparative analysis and many lack value statements”. As we can see from this comment, in terms of current practice and management this makes the document neither workable nor useful for practical situations.

The HA as a document must make it clear why a place or site is part of our heritage and they should be the basis of heritage management recommendations, but as HTA Paul states, and what the other respondents agree on, is that current heritage assessments are

often *lacking* this element. Further to this issue on HAs as a document is the question of *who* is writing the HAs, *where* these documents are destined to go, *who* they will be read by, and *what* purpose they will then be put to. Throughout the process of assessing a heritage place or site the intended audience of the document should be clear particularly as, in addition to making the significance and value of a site clear, it is a document designed to serve to attract political, economic, and public support for a site. This is one element that HR Andrew identified, that the purpose of a HA as a document is not as clearly defined as that of other heritage documents:

“Who’s your market? Who is going to read it? What is it for? I mean is it a heritage assessment that is aimed at other heritage professionals? Because I’d rather see a conservation plan. Or, is this a heritage assessment that is for the new manager in the office who doesn’t have a fricking clue about historic shit and, um, needs to know about the sites that he’s been asked to manage? Because you would write that in a very different manner. Or is this a document that is trying to prove significance of a site or of an individual site? In which case have you actually gone and looked at a representative sample of these sites to work out, even on a regional level, if this is an important example of one?”

Heritage assessments are a resource intended to make the heritage value of a site or place explicit. They are a document for professionals and for interested parties. The weakness is that there is little guidance for these documents, and the abstruseness found in the assessment process means that these documents often do not make clear the core value of heritage. This is not an issue that is isolated to heritage assessments, but it is a weakness that was seen by respondents as having an effect upon their practice on the ground.

Heritage in practice – Bureaucracy

This section contains an examination of the material that emerged from the analysis of the interviews around the subtheme that was identified as ‘bureaucracy’. This subtheme has two units of meaning contained within it, these are ‘funding’ and the ‘disconnect between agencies’. Initially, I was reluctant to include these themes as an element of this chapter, but these issues are directly related to the ability of DOC staff to carry out heritage assessments effectively and complete research into the ways to best manage the heritage that DOC is mandated to conserve. Extensive research has been carried out placing an emphasis upon heritage as a valuable asset not only culturally but

economically, particularly for tourism and as an element of the ever expanding leisure industry.¹⁵ Despite the continuing evolution and changes in perception of heritage, government funding for heritage identification, assessment, and management remains limited and “grudging” (McLean 2000, 228). Director General of the Department of Conservation Alistair Morrison stated that DOC “staff know how to deliver 10 for the price of 5”¹⁶, and this belief along with restrictions on funding and misconceptions of heritage value, can be seen to be at the root of many of the issues that face historic heritage staff. There is recognition at DOC that because of the limitations that are placed upon funding for heritage that some concessions must be made.

Internationally there has been a realisation that heritage agencies need funding in order to articulate and assert the values of heritage (Baxter 2009, 91). However, there has been a lack of support in New Zealand for heritage projects, yet as HTA Paul clarifies;

The government makes annual decisions on the effort that they want to put in [...] and how much the annual budget will be [...] So DOC [...] might say ‘well we’re underfunded’ but the government will say ‘well no you’re not, that’s all we want to invest in your work area, you have exactly the amount we intended’. So those are [just] different ways of saying ‘well we don’t actually want you to do any more’.

Respondents were all extremely realistic when discussing the funding that heritage receives at the Department. The current government environment has placed a great amount of pressure upon DOC to be transparent and accountable and a particular spotlight has been directed towards the funding that is received. Increased funding was seen by respondents as being one of the most prominent factors for change and was repeatedly stressed for the effect that it could have on current practice. It was argued that increased funding would provide the means to complete research, to enhance their ability to work within best practice guidelines, and to innovate. Unfortunately, the material shows that none of the respondents were particularly optimistic about this being achieved due to the fact that heritage is often viewed, as described by HTA Richard, as a “nice to have”. It is apparent that New Zealand needs to learn from the

¹⁵ Many books and articles have been written dealing with this subject, those most consulted for this dissertation are Hall 1993; Smith 2006; Smith, Messenger, and Soderland 2010.

¹⁶ This statement was made as part of an interview on the 28/04/2013 around the 2013 restructures of the Department of Conservation, accessed May 2013, <http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/speeches-and-opinion-pieces/why-doc-is-changing/>

international sector and recognise the economic benefits and values of heritage places rather than viewing them, again as articulated by HTA Richard, “as a liability”. However, the history of insufficient funding for heritage at DOC, and the lack of support from the government, make it difficult to be optimistic that a change in perception will occur.

Similarly to the impact that funding has upon current heritage assessment practice and heritage management is what has been identified as the ‘disconnect between agencies’. According to respondents, there is a gulf between New Zealand’s heritage agencies – in particular between DOC, the NZHPT, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (henceforth MCH), and Local/Regional Councils. As has been outlined in Chapter One, each of these groups are responsible at different levels to identify, assess, and manage heritage places and are mandated under different pieces of legislation to do so, and this is where HR Andrew believes “New Zealand has got it quite wrong, there is this massive disconnect between agencies that have responsibility to protect and manage”. Each of these agencies is expected to act as an authority, but none have the resources or the statutory position as a lead agency in order to fulfil this role. The NZHPT as HR Andrew goes on to say are “supposedly New Zealand’s lead agency on historic heritage issues but...they don’t have anybody on the ground, and they don’t do any hands on heritage protection”. While being designated as the lead agency, NZHPT lack a clearly defined national leadership role and do most of their heritage work in the policy, procedure, and legal realms, according to the NZHPT properties website, NZHPT is responsible for fewer than 45 properties.¹⁷

In comparison, DOC, as HR Andrew states, “manages a third of New Zealand, including more archaeological and historic heritage than NZHPT. But, we are not the lead agency, and we don’t have the expertise, but we do have people on the ground, but we don’t have the legal remit to act”. There is a huge margin between the numbers of sites and places managed by DOC and those managed by NZHPT, both are legally mandated to assess and manage heritage in New Zealand, and both suffer similar

¹⁷ Historic Places Trust, ‘Places to visit’, accessed May 2013, http://www.historicplaces.org.nz/placestovisit.aspx?sc_lang=en

problems with funding and resources. But as Andrew points out, DOC lacks any statutory powers to deal with heritage dissonance. The status of NZHPT as the self-proclaimed lead agency has led to huge issues around the role and responsibilities of DOC, particularly for heritage assessment and the ability to produce consistent standards for the assessment process due to the creation of a “policy vacuum wherein the articulation of heritage policy, the setting of national standards, support for local authorities, and provision of guidance, is wanting” (Donaghey 2008, 117).

The fact that DOC and NZHPT each develop operational policy and procedure for heritage completely independently of one another has meant that no consistent approach has been developed, and that inefficiencies and inconsistencies in the heritage assessment process have grown more marked. This disconnect between the two largest agencies has led to significant heritage being lost, as HR Andrew states, “to the death by a thousand cuts” approach. Respondents argued that this disconnect, however, does not end with DOC and NZHPT, it extends to the MCH and local councils, meaning that the effectiveness of evaluation and assessment systems are stretched extremely thinly. There is no guidance that currently works specifically to cause collaboration between any of these agencies and this is a huge issue for heritage management as a whole. It is local council where much of the operational heritage protection can be found, but as HR Andrew states:

Councils, are responsible for putting sites of significance on their district plans and running the resource consent process, and unless you have a council that is, I mean they are starting to get better and more switched on but unless you have a council that’s got its head on straight, they’ll issue a resource consent for an archaeological landscape without even talking to the Trust.

The role of MCH as a public authority is in many ways more of an advisory and advocacy agency rather than an operational one. There is a challenge found in this disconnect between the major heritage management agencies. It was seen by respondents as being essential that some common operational procedure or policy be established for heritage assessment and that the co-ordination and creation of consistent standards be implemented for the overall protection of heritage. It is a problem that none of the major agencies (councils excluded) have a clearly defined leadership or management role and as a result the articulation of heritage policy has been ineffectual.

Summary

This chapter has sought to establish how DOC currently defines heritage and the effect that these definitions or lack thereof, have upon their current practice, in particular heritage assessment. DOC staff interviewed outlined the various ways that they understand and interpret heritage, and that best practice definitions ‘as an ideal’ are not always the most workable in the field. It is apparent from the interviews that although the majority of professionals are comfortable with using the definitions that are found in DOC policy, and more widely in New Zealand legislation in their everyday practice, there is also an acknowledgement that these definitions do not always suit the situation on the ground, in particular when dealing with wahi tapu, taonga, and other types of Maori heritage.

Respondents also stated that their own personal definitions were at times at odds with their professional opinions or the legislation that is in place. Despite the caveats that each respondent expressed, there was generally consensus about what elements of the definition were the most important for heritage assessment practice: ‘significance’ and ‘value’. The interviewees made it clear that as a defining element, the terms ‘significance’ and ‘value’ have a major effect upon the way that they understood, interpreted, and assessed heritage. The major issue was generally that the ascription of significance and value is often tied into economic value or based on visitor numbers rather than the non-economic or social value and significance that heritage places have. It also became clear that the way in which definitions are used at DOC has an impact upon the *representativeness* of the heritage that is actively managed. Based on this research I would argue that heritage managers and heritage management should move towards defining heritage in such a way that the definitions are no longer at odds with the heritage that they are trying to assign value and significance to. There should be a way to understand and assess places or sites that are of recognisably and distinctly separate heritage elements or types that will better reflect their characteristics.

The major conclusion to draw on definitions of heritage from this dissertation therefore is that the lack of common definitions in policy and legislation has a huge impact upon the practice of heritage assessment. Respondents stated that definitions need to be responsive to all elements of heritage – tangible and intangible – social, cultural, and community significances, and of the different types of heritage that are found in New

Zealand in order to be workable and useful in the field. Heritage assessments, as discussed by the respondents, are made up of a number of strengths and weaknesses, many of which can be focussed upon as inconsistency and standardisation issues, problems with audience and the purpose of the HA, and the difficulties that are a follow on effect from the limits of current definitions. One of the most interesting issues that was found in the analysis of published HAs was that the elements of the process that are most effective if viewed as comparative assessments, in particular the establishment of the site within the national context, were inconsistent and in some lacking altogether. The beauty of having the national context section is that, if it were carried out more consistently, or perhaps to a new standard, it would allow for the regional and national picture to be seen while also indicating local distinctions, it would also allow for comparative assessments to be carried out for similar/related heritage instead of the 'one offs' that are currently carried out. Finally I would argue that it would be a more fitting way to manage the thousands of archaeological sites that DOC are responsible for. Respondents noted that comparative assessment is an element of practice that is extremely difficult, but that 'one off' assessments do little to tell the overall story of New Zealand heritage (this will be further discussed in Chapter Three).

Interestingly it became clear that in the places where respondents saw strengths in the current heritage assessment system, weaknesses were also apparent, for example the peer review process. It is extremely valuable to peer review, particularly in the current government climate where transparency is sought. The weakness found here is that the process is not being rigorously carried out and as a result the finished products, i.e. the HAs, are not as valuable as they could be. This is perhaps related to the issue that was discussed, that HAs as a document have little guidance provided, and as such there is a high amount of abstruseness found throughout the process. The lack of guidance and support for heritage assessment documents is in many ways related to the limited funding that DOC receives for heritage, however the view that heritage is a 'nice to have' rather than an asset that can contribute to New Zealand's economic wealth is one that will be extremely difficult to overcome. This is not helped by the disconnect identified by the respondents between the major heritage agencies and local councils. It is acknowledged that there is a need for effective heritage leadership in New Zealand, but there was a lack of consensus as to how this may be achieved, where it would go, and in what form this lead agency would be. However, the loss of heritage due to this

disconnect may be a factor that can help to challenge the current status quo and result in an answer to the operational and policy problems that are currently faced.

Chapter Three

“We Can’t Protect Everything”:

Advancing heritage assessment practice at the Department of Conservation

Introduction

This chapter examines the second major theme that was identified in the analysis of the interview data, which relates to the second of the central research questions of this dissertation – *what place and form should heritage assessment have and take in future practice at the Department of Conservation*. The analysis presented in this chapter explores some of the issues in practice identified in the previous chapter, with a particular focus upon where the strengths and weaknesses of the current heritage assessment framework and process are found, and presents some of the realities of addressing these for future practice. The previous examination highlighted a number of problems, inconsistencies, and confusing elements in the existing DOC HA framework, leaving some questions about whether or not it can be argued to be working effectively for practice. The challenges faced at DOC have serious implications for heritage management, particularly in relation to whether or not current assessments are appropriate to sustainably manage historic heritage.

As with Chapter Two, a number of interconnected subthemes were identified as elements of the overarching theme I have termed as ‘future practice’. The subthemes identified are: (1) ‘Assessment Practice’ which builds on the issues identified in Chapter Two in relation to the form that heritage assessment framework could take at DOC and the impact that a more comparative analysis system could have upon practice; (2) ‘Dialogues’, which examines the influence that further engagement with critical or academic theory could have on practice and vice versa; and (3) ‘Advocacy’ which is focussed upon not only the role that DOC has in the management of New Zealand heritage, but the role that DOC could play in encouraging community or other groups to become more involved in heritage management and governance.

Future Practice – Assessment practice

In the previous chapter I found that there are areas of adequacy and inadequacy found in the current HA process. Here I argue that if HA is to remain a useful tool for heritage

management, there needs to be a re-examination of the process of how and why places are selected and how heritage is assessed. The main focus of the following analysis relates to the HA framework, and whether a more comparative analysis framework could address some of the strengths and weaknesses that have been identified in the current heritage assessment system. A comparative analysis framework for the purpose of this research is best outlined as an assessment of heritage value and significance that would relate a site or heritage place to similar places in New Zealand (or against similar examples internationally), and establish its relevance against those other places. This would be a major advantage for DOC, as it would allow for comparisons of significance to be made and help towards addressing the issues that are seen in the current ad hoc process of heritage assessment. A more comparative analysis framework designed to provide heritage managers with a more than indicative view of the national scope would bring New Zealand more into line with countries such as England. However, the respondents did not agree about a system using comparative assessment as a methodological process. Discussions about comparative assessment were prominent in all of the interviews, and it became clear that any framework that furthers integrated comparative assessment as its methodological basis for heritage assessment would not be without limitations, some related to comparative heritage assessment itself, and some related to existing issues in heritage assessment practice.

Respondents identified a number of significant limitations and deficiencies in key areas of current heritage assessment procedure, highlighted the fact that there are considerable discrepancies in the present system, and acknowledged that there are a number of challenges that affect DOC's capacity to function as an effective heritage management agency. In particular the lack of common definitions in legislation, the limitations on funding, and the confusion over the role that the agency has in relation to others, all affect DOC's ability to fulfil its mandate. The concerns that were discussed relating to the current framework for heritage assessment at DOC, however, are not easily addressed, despite the disparate nature of New Zealand heritage assessment techniques having a negative effect upon transparent, efficient, and one might argue *responsible*, heritage management.

All respondents had opinions on how these issues could be addressed, and supported the idea that a new approach could be adopted. However, there was an overwhelming

impression that, as HTA Richard states “it’s going to be extremely difficult”. There are already a number of questions concerning the strategies and processes of heritage assessment in New Zealand and the extent to which it can be said current frameworks are working effectively – particularly as assessment criteria vary not only between agencies, but within agencies. Overall there was no clear agreement between the respondents on how best to address the issues that they had identified, and there were a number of difficulties asserted that respondents regarded as being possible impediments to addressing the shortcomings. A major concern about the likelihood of changes being made to the HA system, in the words of HR Andrew, would be “whether or not there would be the political will to do it”, and at the centre of the issue was the question of whether or not the issues that are seen in current practice are caused by the current heritage assessment process itself, or by the operational strategies that are in place to carry them out. Related to this, there is the question of whether changes to heritage assessment frameworks would actually be beneficial to HAs in terms of improving the quality and relevance of the document.

With regard to assessment procedure, respondents were asked whether a redefined comparative heritage assessment, as either an addition to the current procedure or as an element of a new process, could be an improvement on current assessment methodologies. What the analysis of the interview material has made clear is that there are several underlying assumptions about the process of comparative assessment that would need to be addressed prior to the adoption of such a framework for practice. The first of these is the underlying impact of the place or site based approach for assessment. For example, HR Andrew stated that:

“If your heritage assessment has been done properly, then there already should be an element of comparison because you should already be defining what sort of building it was, when it was built, or what sort of archaeological site it is, or time you think it’s of, or who it relates to and that is going to [...] generate a degree of comparison”.

What is described here is the expression of one of the main paradigms that underpin heritage assessment at New Zealand agencies – that the value or significance of a site is established through an analysis of only that place, rather than in relation to similar sites throughout New Zealand, or the world. In short, it describes analysis, but no comparison. This is not only an issue at DOC – assessments of heritage value at

NZHPT can be argued to be of little use for strategic heritage management as they do not compare; they simply record the presence or absence of a particular trait or value, and based on the presence or absence the heritage is considered to be valuable. The relevance of historic heritage needs to be established against other comparable places in order for a valid selection of heritage to be managed and for national as well as local and regional characteristics to be recognised. A comparative analysis system would allow for assessments to be placed into context, nationally or regionally, and allow for gaps in knowledge to be addressed. Ultimately it would provide the means to contextualise and better evaluate the heritage that is currently managed by DOC. All respondents agreed that comparative assessment of heritage sites was an important element of practice, particularly as the reality of heritage management at DOC (and in New Zealand and the rest of the world generally) is that, as HR Maria states, “we can’t protect everything, and we can’t actively manage everything”.

The ability to comparatively assess a site for significance against a similar site is crucial in order to effectively and sustainably manage heritage. The idea of representativeness was addressed in Chapter Two in relation to the effect that definitions have upon heritage assessments, and I argued that definitions for heritage assessment need to be responsive to the individual characteristics of the heritage that agencies are assigning significance and value to. I assert that heritage assessments should be more responsive to the qualities that are outstanding or of more significance, recognising that heritage is made up of both intrinsic and relative qualities – essential, unchanging core values together with the dynamic values that can change over time (Donaghey 2008, 13).

Respondents argued that DOC should manage a representative sample of New Zealand heritage, but for DOC, who manage a third of New Zealand’s landmass, the concept of representativeness is a difficult one for practice, particularly as there is a tendency to carry out each heritage assessment as a one off rather than in comparison to heritage in New Zealand overall. So while representativeness is asserted as a concern, it remains the case that the current HA framework provides little indication of how sites fit into the national context. Furthermore it must be ascertained whether, for heritage management at DOC, the concept of representativeness is a useful paradigm for practice. There is currently a project underway at DOC aimed at developing an optimisation portfolio for historic sites, using software called ‘Zonation’ to analyse heritage sites in regards to representativeness, calculating what changes could be made

without the 'remaining' assemblage becoming non-representative of the whole. The practicality and impact that this will have remains to be seen.

There is a further assumption based on the usefulness of a more comparative and nationally focussed heritage assessment framework. Respondents generally agreed that a system that could be used to gain a better idea of the 'big picture' of heritage managed at DOC would be a positive change. However, there were a number of caveats placed around the support of such a change – in particular the usefulness of a system that is more focussed upon a national perspective. HR Andrew states that “historic heritage is, usually, about local relationships. Through quirks of fate you might have some that has become regionally, nationally or even internationally significant, but it all starts at the back door”. There is an assumption in heritage management that identification of national importance will automatically resign places of local or regional importance to a lesser status, whose preservation then becomes uncertain (Donaghey 2008, 122; Allen 1998).

For heritage management, DOC stands separately from other organisations for the simple fact that the majority of its work is carried out on the ground in regional Conservancies and local Areas. All of the respondents challenged the idea of defining heritage in terms of national significance or importance, perhaps, because this has not been a particularly essential element of heritage assessment practice in the past at DOC. It is asserted that the lack of a national strategy for heritage assessment has led to a number of challenges and has had a negative effect upon our understanding of New Zealand heritage overall (Donaghey 2008, 130). What most respondents asserted, in terms of a national strategy, can be seen to reflect current DOC processes inasmuch as current practice at DOC is designed more to reflect local or regional trends rather than national ones. What I would argue in this case is that as DOC is a governmental agency applying taxpayers' money to heritage, that there is not a strong case to be made for the management of local heritage. DOC is perhaps better positioned to invest in heritage that has a meaning for all New Zealanders while councils could manage at a local or regional level.

Perhaps because of this more regionalised approach, all participants had difficulty in seeing how the establishment of a national comparative approach would be an effective way to address current issues, as articulated by HTA Richard, “from a strategic point of

view, it all sounds good in theory, but I'm not decided that it's the best way to go and as a tool for assessing from a national context point of view, I'm not sure that that's the best way". HTA Paul asserted that one way of implementing comparative assessment as an element of future practice would *not* be to create an overarching national framework or register, but to carry out the assessment on priority groups of heritage places that need re-evaluation – however, how to establish these priority groups would be a further challenge. An assessment that could be conducted as an element of progressive improvement and carried out on a pragmatic basis, would help to address the issue that many of the interviewees saw as being one of the key things that would obstruct the development of the HA system – funding. Levels of resourcing for research are limited, but it does not appear that this is going to change, so the ability to manage heritage at a level that is achievable is necessary. While the expansion of heritage strategies is not currently a key concern for DOC, by prioritising the comparative assessment of heritage into groups it may be easier to justify the funding for such a project.

A further element of current practice that potentially decreases the usefulness of a comparative assessment strategy is tied into the fact that there exist no common definitions for heritage and limited consistency in values and significance statements. Significance assessment as an element of a comparative heritage assessment would be a crucial aspect of the process if these documents were to be at all effective for heritage management practice. As discussed in Chapter Two, the statement of significance would justify decisions around the management of heritage and form a reasoned argument for the value of that heritage. The application of values would need to be closely examined to ensure consistency and to mitigate any confusion that could be created in the evaluation process. As HTA Richard put it, "there are too many variables, particularly when you're talking about something that people are as passionate about... they bring their own values into it, and... what one person thinks a place is significant for, well you can get ten different opinions". The requirement to consolidate heritage values and significances would need to be carried out on a pragmatic and practical basis. Content would be the most difficult element to control, because if there were too many variables taken into consideration the assessment would become so broad as to be essentially meaningless, but if it was too narrow the issue of assessments being carried out as one offs would not be being addressed, and the issue of having limited knowledge of the national scope would still exist. Further to this, just as is seen in

current practice, the process of comparative assessment would be, as HR Maria states, “kind-of subjective as well, quite subjective really”. Heritage values are shaped by “people and not inanimate machines” (Trigger 1989, 106), so from an epistemological perspective it can be asserted that it is impossible for a heritage manager to be completely objective, and as such it must be argued that the question is not what systems can be applied to ensure objectivity, but rather how do we make the subjectivities more transparent.

The research has identified that for practice, any changes to the system must, in order to be useful for heritage assessment, be workable. As suggested in Chapter Two, the lack of guidance for HAs often leads to confusion about these documents, in particular *where* these documents are destined to go, *who* they will be read by, and *what* purpose they will then be put to. This was also found in the discussions around future practice. Respondents all noted that changing the process for HA was going to be extremely difficult, and there was a particular focus upon what the changes would be able to provide for practical purposes, because as HTA Richard points out:

“Any changes... made need to make things simpler, staff are not going to want to wade through documents, or create work, that is just going to be harder for them. I guess if there is some real, tangible use that they can get out of it, then they will buy into it a lot more... otherwise, if it’s just some document for a shiny pants person up at national office, which although may be really useful in the bigger scheme of things, if you don’t see the benefit of it yourself then it’s almost lost and becomes much more of a hassle than a useful document”.

I would also argue that in order to be useful in practice, the issue may lie less with the system of heritage assessment, but with its critical application when putting together the HA.

Interestingly, one thing that came out of the interviews was the suggestion that DOC, instead of attempting to develop new systems for historic heritage management and heritage assessment, begin to move towards a more holistic management system that incorporates natural and historic. It is apparent that one of the most significant hindrances for historic heritage at DOC is that, despite the over-arching and unified role of the organisation, there is still a division between natural and cultural heritage (Aplin 2002, 301). Natural and cultural or historic heritage management are traditionally dealt with differently despite the management of both having common features, and as

scholars argue “no aspect of nature is un-impacted by human agency, no artefact devoid of environmental impress” (Lowenthal 2005, 81).

There is an augmented understanding in New Zealand that historic heritage is a limited resource, much like the kiwi or the kakapo, and that once it is gone it is gone for good. The legacies of both nature and culture and the relics of these deserve protection as non-renewable and finite and the heritages of nature and culture can be viewed as being interconnected (Lowenthal 2005, 85). It seems that a more holistic management system could be a way to acknowledge the different types of heritage that are managed by DOC while remaining responsive to the values of historic heritage and its place within the natural landscape. The integration of natural and historic concerns is a key feature of the increased sustainability agenda (Strange & Whitney 2003, 222), particularly as the same dangers are faced by natural and historic heritage managers – private and corporate development, limited funding, and technical advance – the “bomb and the bulldozer transform the world” at the cost of both heritages. As such the questions must be asked:

Is natural heritage more or less dispensable, diversified, durable, resilient, fragile or embattled than cultural heritage? What lessons for cultural heritage might be learned from the history of efforts to conserve and manage nature, and vice versa?

(Lowenthal 2005, 82)

The management of natural and cultural heritage may stem from different reasons – natural aiming for long term ecological conservation while historic is based more upon cultural or aesthetic – both are increasingly been called upon to contribute or to pay their way. Where nature conservators have learnt to articulate their arguments for the value of the natural world in economic terms, historic heritage managers have had a more difficult time carrying this out (Lowenthal 2005, 85). Comparative assessment work is currently being carried out at DOC as an element of Experience Development Planning (or EDPs). These documents have been distilled from current practice heritage management and museum approaches in various countries, and look at what a site can offer in terms of visitor experiences. Visitor valuation of heritage sites, to date, has not had the same level of critical examination as the public valuation of museums (Scott 2007; Scott (ed.) 2013). So where the DOC SOI 2012-2017 (p. 25) states that visitor numbers will be used as an indicator of public interest in heritage and that management

decisions will be based upon visitor trends, a number of issues are raised particularly around the use of quantitative over qualitative measures of success. As HTA Richard states “one of our points at the moment is that heritage should only be managed in places that people go to [...] In my mind that doesn’t mean that it’s less significant [...] I think visitor counts are a real threat to heritage management, there’s a real difference between who cares and visitors”. Basing management decisions on visitor numbers needs further thought, because it is unclear what impact people will have upon heritage and whether or not this is an appropriate way of analysing the relative importance or value of heritage.

Future Practice – Dialogues

As was established in the literature review and preceding chapters, there has been little critical or academic analysis of New Zealand heritage management, necessitating a closer examination of the role that an increased dialogue with critical or academic heritage theory could have on heritage assessment practice at DOC and vice versa. The analysis of the interview data shows that respondents feel ambivalent about the relationship of theory and practice: while there is a need to reconcile practice with academic studies, academic and theoretical studies could also benefit from an increased dialogue with practice. It is apparent that engagement and consultation with each of these elements could have far reaching consequences for the future of heritage assessment practice; however, respondents were not optimistic about the implementation of critical studies and were dubious about the extent to which it would be productive and useful for practice. Despite this muted reaction from the respondents, this lack of critical analysis in the heritage sector could be addressed through an increased dialogue with wider heritage theory to encourage the development of heritage praxis.

There is a lot of disagreement over the place that academic theory or critical heritage studies could have at DOC. Respondents agreed that assessment practice needs to reflect the heritage that it is evaluating – the process must change as new information is found, better techniques are developed, and as understandings change in light of scholarship. However, while some respondents asserted, like HTA Richard, that “there is definitely a place for both”, increased interaction between DOC as a heritage agency and critical heritage studies was not seen by respondents as an answer to current

assessment issues. This research has highlighted the difficulty in increasing the engagement and dialogue between theory and practice because as described by HR Maria, “academic study tends to be a little bit removed from what we actually do on the ground”, and in the same way practice tends to be removed from theory or critical studies. Despite this assertion, there *is* already a relationship between heritage at a critical, theoretical, or academic level and heritage at a practical management level because “if theory has practical outcomes, it follows that every-day practices also have theoretical implications” (Labrum and McCarthy 2005, 9), so the need to reconcile the current limited dialogue between the two is crucial. Theory and practice should be continually challenging one another in order for heritage praxis to mature, creating the opportunity for the development of ‘applied theory and theorised practice’ (Labrum and McCarthy 2005, 9). Increased engagement would provide benefits for both theory and practice. As HR Andrew states “I think that we need to be encouraging those of us who work in this sector to actually put our ideas, and our thoughts, and our issues on paper and get them out there”. It is apparent that there is not a lot of ongoing interaction between those who comment upon heritage management at an academic level, and the heritage practitioners who manage heritage on the ground. The two areas have a number of parallels so increased engagement by both heritage practitioners and heritage academics with the realities and concepts of heritage management at all levels has significant potential to better inform future heritage assessment strategies.

In the case of DOC, the ability of practitioners to further engage with the ‘so what’ question that has become almost synonymous with academic heritage studies in heritage assessments would be beneficial on a number of levels. It would contribute to the paradigm shift seen in the United Kingdom focussed upon gaining a greater understanding of what ‘heritage management does’ (Baxter 2009, 85), and facilitate a shift in the reasoning of the management of heritage from being implied to actually being analysed. Further to creating the opportunity to question the ‘why’ of heritage management, increased dialogue between heritage practitioners and those who comment upon heritage practice would provide the frameworks for further questioning ‘who’ is managing heritage.

The benefit would not be one sided. HR Andrew explained the useful research their staff have carried out in practical areas, explaining:

“We have done work on designing tracks that do less damage to sites. We’ve worked out ways to build fences that do very little damage to archaeology. We have got methodologies that allow us to excavate and do as little damage as possible”.

This beneficial information would be useful to critical heritage studies and to academic archaeology because it would provide a practical grounding for further comment upon heritage management in New Zealand, allowing for the dissemination of publications that actually reflect the needs and understandings of professional practice which are currently under-examined in the literature.

Further to the discussion on dialogues, respondents suggested that increasing opportunities for heritage managers in New Zealand to connect with international counterparts would be beneficial for practice. There are a number of agencies internationally that have similar problems to DOC in terms of heritage assessment and utilise a number of different systems to evaluate and assess heritage significance. However, where many other countries differ from New Zealand is that most have in place a primary heritage agency which is responsible for developing heritage policy and strategy for assessment (Donaghey 2008, 38).

Future Practice – Advocacy

DOC, as I have previously stated, is mandated to manage natural and historic heritage for the benefit of present and future generations of New Zealanders, and this is where respondents saw the role of DOC diversifying in the future. Discussions on this subject have been designated as the sub theme ‘Advocacy’. This focuses upon the role that respondents see DOC taking in the future and the place that heritage can have as a part of this. This sub theme has three extremely closely interrelated units of meaning contained within it; (1) ‘public education’; (2) ‘public involvement’; and (3) ‘recognition’.

Respondents asserted that an important element of advocating for the future of heritage places would involve the need to quantify the values of heritage in economic and social terms and the benefits that heritage could have. Heritage is recognised as playing an ‘incisive role in the formation of national consciousness, in national unity, and in economic and social development’ (Edson 2004, 345). Despite this, there have been few studies carried out that quantify heritage value in the more utilitarian terms of economic

and social policy (Scott 2007, 1). There are a number of ways that a community can engage with heritage places that could be beneficial. By emphasising these elements of heritage, interviewees asserted that popular or community ‘buy in’ could be an important way to conserve the significance and value of a heritage place or site without needing to rely upon limited funding provided by the government. HTA Paul noted that the Central Otago Rail Trail is a successful example of heritage having economic and social uses, stating that “I think that we have got to optimise the economic use of heritage, so if places have an economic use we should put them to that use”. Other respondents noted that getting heritage places to ‘pay their way’ would be an effective element for future practice. The adaptive re use of heritage buildings has shown that heritage does have a place in the modern world, however, there is significant division of opinion on how to carry this out, what losses to fabric are acceptable, and what effect the reuse of heritage buildings has upon its significance (See Philp 2012, 14-22).

Public education about the nature and importance of assessing and managing heritage and the encouragement of public involvement in heritage were seen to be two of the most important aspects of future practice at DOC. This was also where respondents saw the most benefits for the future of heritage management in New Zealand. It has been asserted that heritage should be representative not only *of* the people and conserved *for* the people, but it should also be identified and conserved *by* the people (Davison 1991, 11). In the wake of the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010-11, and the on-going process of rebuilding the city, it has become apparent that there is a public belief that heritage is synonymous with old, as HTA Richard points out, “the mind-set is that historic heritage is only stuff that is old, as opposed to things that are important”. The role that DOC could take in the future for heritage could be advocating that value and significance is not *always* directly related to the age of the heritage. There is a demonstrable need for further work to be carried out to explore the ways that the public perceive and understand heritage places, in particular the value that they associate with it, similarly to the work that has been carried out on museums and public values (Scott 2006, 2009). A comparative analysis framework, focussed upon value propositions of what makes a site different or more important when compared to another, would arguably be an appropriate way to progressively establish heritage relevance and encourage public involvement.

Currently there is little engagement with communities in the heritage assessment process despite the fact that DOC employs a definition for historic heritage that is based upon the public, in particular ‘the next generation’. Public engagement comes down to trying to assert the values of heritage by emphasising the relationship between communities and heritage places, and as HR Maria states, “engaging the public and causing the public to value their heritage places and to actually want to actively protect them”. Respondents asserted that by involving community groups in the assessment and management process DOC would be able to further acknowledge and integrate community values. A large element of the need to engage with community groups and the public comes from the limitations that are placed on funding for heritage at DOC. By encouraging people to get involved in heritage, HTA Paul pointed out that “if people see value then they see it as paying its way. Popular places get funded, and that’s not to say that they have to have lots of visitors, they could just be popular in people’s hearts, but one way or another they have to be popular”.

Respondents in particular asserted the importance of advocating for increased engagement, education, and involvement with Maori, in particular for sites of significance for iwi and hapu. Increased engagement between iwi groups and DOC for the future assessment and management of heritage places and sites, in particular archaeological sites, was emphasised as being a significant element of future practice. Indigenous understandings and values of heritage places and sites differ in a number of ways to the Western interpretations that make up the majority of heritage decision making processes, so there is a need to examine the attitudes that Maori have towards heritage and to incorporate these interpretations into heritage assessment and management. Similar changes have been occurring in the governance of museums in New Zealand in terms of growing engagement with community groups, and this increased cooperation has had benefits for both groups and has resulted in the ‘indigenisation of the museum’ (McCarthy 2007, 12). If Maori were more involved in the assessment and governance of heritage places a number of concerns about statements of significance and the understandings of different elements of value could be addressed. This is a challenge for DOC because there is a gap between the way that Maori and the public generally value heritage and the more Westernised and institutional value that is assigned during the heritage assessment process. By increasing cooperation and engagement DOC could establish an extremely beneficial

partnership to manage heritage sites, particularly sites of significance to Maori, also helping to reduce conflict due to cultural differences and sensitivities in regards to research and information.

Summary

This chapter reviewed some of the new directions that DOC respondents believe heritage assessment and management may take in the future. The concept of comparative heritage assessment being implemented as a more extensive element of the process did not meet the agreement of all respondents, but for senior management it seems increasingly crucial if DOC is going to be able to sustainably manage heritage into the future. Respondents did agree that comparative assessment of heritage sites is an important element of practice, particularly as a tool for steering decision making on heritage conservation. However, while discussions around comparative assessment were prominent in all of the interviews it became clear that respondents believed that any framework that further integrated comparative assessment as its methodological basis would not be without limitations. Underpinning the implementation of a comparative analysis framework are a number of assumptions that need to be challenged, in particular the expression of one of the main paradigms used in New Zealand heritage management agencies – that the importance of a site can be established by looking only at that place in isolation. This site based approach is not very useful in terms of gaining an understanding of the national scope of heritage types, rather a comparative analysis framework should be used to analyse the site and relate it to similar places throughout New Zealand or the world, establishing its importance and relevance against those places. In terms of heritage types respondents asserted that it was important that DOC manage a representative selection of heritage and while the integration of a comparative analysis framework would be a useful system it must be asked if representativeness is a useful paradigm for DOC heritage management. I would assert that, currently, it is not. Representative sampling should be based upon a thorough evaluation of the heritage resource and while DOC are aware of the overall portfolio, the lack of comparative analysis of sites means that information on the national scope is limited. However, representativeness, as an integral element of heritage assessment *would* help to address the assumption that a nationalised system would resign places of local or regional importance to a lesser status.

As has already been demonstrated, the inconsistencies of the current HA system seriously encumber heritage management practice, so any changes towards a more comparative heritage assessment process would have to wait until the issues in current practice have been addressed, in particular the lack of common definitions and inconsistency in the assignation of significance and value. It would, however, still be advantageous for DOC to consider the place of a more nationalised approach to heritage assessment. An unexpected finding of the discussion into future practice that warrants further investigation is the possibility of further integration of natural and cultural or historic heritage management at DOC. Both facets of management face similar challenges, are increasingly marketed in the same way by eco and heritage tourism, and are progressively being understood as being finite and non-renewable resources, but their management remains splintered and marked by enmity rather than amity (Lowenthal 2005, 81). The legacies that we receive from both should not be managed or conserved at the expense of the other, so I would argue that the development of a more holistic management system could be a way to acknowledge the different types of heritage in New Zealand while being responsive to the values of historic heritage and its place within the natural landscape.

This chapter also explored the concept of on-going dialogues between DOC and critical and theoretical heritage studies. It appears that engagement and consultation between these elements could have far reaching consequences for the future of heritage assessment practice; and while respondents overall found it difficult to see the benefits of increased interaction with theory or academia due to the perception of academia as being too far removed from practice to be useful, I believe that increased interaction between these two groups would be beneficial for both, particularly if debate went in both directions. Heritage practitioners on the ground have a unique understanding of the realities of carrying out heritage assessment and managing heritage, while heritage academics who comment on the higher level concepts have in depth understandings of specific issues – these two sectors need to further interact on their parallel experiences to further our knowledge overall.

Finally this chapter looked at the role that respondents see DOC fulfilling in the future. Interviewees agreed that an important part of DOC's role in the future will be advocating for heritage, helping to better educate and involve the public to ensure that

heritage is valued into the future. There was also an emphasis, somewhat unexpected, on quantifying the economic and social benefits of managing heritage places. Few studies have been conducted on assessing the performance of historic heritage, although some have been carried out in museums (Scott 2007), which criticise the application of economic paradigms to the complex environment of a museum, and assert that “decisions based upon instrumental criteria that reduce value to material terms, may compromise the [...] heritage values” (Scott 2007, 4). Heritage, in the same way as museums, can be understood as being made up of intrinsic and relative values, and the significance that these values have is yet to be fully explored.

It is interesting to note that in recent DOC media releases there has been an emphasis on creating new partnerships to carry out conservation, as this element also emerged from the analysis of the interviews. People felt that empowering communities, in particular Maori, to become involved in heritage assessment, management, and governance is something that DOC should take seriously in the future – encouraging community groups to become more active in the heritage discourse may be crucial to the future of New Zealand heritage.

Conclusion

“The Art of the Achievable”:

Heritage Assessment at the Department of Conservation

This dissertation began as an investigation of two central research questions: *What is the state of current heritage assessment at the Department of Conservation* and *What place and form could heritage assessment have and take in future practice at the Department of Conservation*. Heritage assessment practice is resolutely at the centre of this study and I believe HA is a critical issue for New Zealand heritage management, not just for DOC, but for all heritage management agencies, so much so that I would extend the scope of the research questions to include New Zealand heritage in general.

Framed with reference to the postmodern theoretical paradigms of the AHD and critical realism, this research is a response to calls for further critical analysis of the tools with which heritage is assessed in the New Zealand context. As I argue in this dissertation the theory that has been applied to heritage assessment is, in many ways, removed from the practicalities of heritage management. The discussion of heritage assessment and the ways in which we view heritage is expanding, so it is essential that the practical and academic discourses react accordingly, as the products of each are complementary. Using a mixed method approach, involving interviews with four DOC staff in conjunction with documentary analysis, this dissertation has shed light on the ways in which DOC staff understand the HA process and placed their opinions firmly within the framework of current literature.

This research has also provided an in depth discussion of HA practice at DOC, and enhanced the understanding of the ways in which HA is carried out, the issues that exist within the process, the challenges that are faced, and the place that HA has in future practice at the organisation. In doing so this research has contributed to closing the current gap in the New Zealand literature by looking at DOC heritage management practice, specifically at HA, and assessing whether or not the system is effective for sustainable practice and further whether the nature and qualities of the current framework provide appropriate information for heritage management and decision making. The analysis of the data has shown that heritage assessment at DOC has a number of shortcomings in crucial areas of the procedure that have had little

exploration in the past, primarily the inconsistencies of reports, the lack of coordination and standardisation, and problems in the assignment of value and significance.

Although on a modest scale, and obviously curtailed by certain limitations, the research has ramifications for current practice, finding that where there are strengths identified in the process, there are corresponding weaknesses. According to the respondents, current HA practice at DOC is not meeting its expectations as a source of information due to the inconsistency, the lack of values statements, and the limited application of comparative analysis. For HA to progress there is a need to address the fact that there is no common definition of historic heritage in New Zealand, either at a legislative, policy, or procedural level. This is not an issue that is limited to DOC, as the lack of common definitions affects the ability of *all* heritage agencies to effectively and appropriately manage heritage. This dissertation argues that it is the process of defining historic heritage in legislation that is too removed from the practical application of those definitions to be useful. Definitions and criteria used to assess heritage are currently too often at odds with the heritage that they are assessing, particularly where archaeological sites or sites of significance to Maori are concerned.

This lack of a common definition makes it extremely difficult for standardisation of HA to occur and impacts the HA process at a number of different levels. The DOC definition based upon fabric, stories, and culture can be seen as creating a bias towards built heritage or “sites with visible appeal”, as stated by HR Maria, which leads to concerns over the representativeness of the heritage assemblage that DOC manage. How far is the paradigm of representativeness useful for management at DOC? This question needs further exploration. While representative studies could help to assuage respondents’ concerns over bias towards sites of national importance to the detriment of local or regional heritage, it would *not* be a useful paradigm for practice, based on DOC’s current inability to provide a thorough evaluation of the historic heritage resource upon which any representative sampling could be based.

There is also a need to further address the ways in which heritage values and significance is assigned. In this dissertation I have argued that heritage is made up of intrinsic and relative values, and that heritage value is something constructed and not an absolute quality. I assert that the assessment and assignment of these values in a clearly articulated, consistent, and coherent way would make plain the significance of that

heritage; however, there is limited critical application of the current HA framework creating a fundamental weakness in DOC's ability to strategically manage historic heritage. The ways in which value and significance are assigned could be improved, particularly if assessments of different types of sites are to be regarded as being equivalent. Improving the assessment of value and significance is an absolutely crucial element because the current system does not currently map through to the 'so what' (i.e. the actual management outcome), in other words it does not demonstrate its validity in objectively verifiable ways.

Value based arguments need to be well developed and convincing no matter what the type of heritage and regardless of personal values or assumptions, making clear *why* that heritage is significant – without this the document is neither workable nor useful for practice. Although respondents agree that the process of significance and values assessments is subjective, I would counter that from an epistemological perspective the question is not whether heritage managers can be more objective, or what systems could be applied to ensure objectivity – rather the question is *how* can DOC heritage managers make the subjectivities that are present in their practice and the HA process more transparent.

For the practice of effective HA further attention needs to be paid to making these documents as consistent as possible, as currently the HA framework is inconsistently applied. While the core criterion of the process is straightforward, there is little guidance for the execution of the document, meaning that the process is variable and uncoordinated. This significantly reduces the usefulness of the HA, so the establishment of a more rigorous overarching strategy is crucial if these documents are to be used for the effective management of heritage in operational terms.

The problems currently seen in the peer review process must also be addressed. In a climate where accountability is required, a more vigorous peer review process would allow for the technique of value assessment and significance attribution to be evaluated and the criteria used examined. This would make the HA process not only more transparent, but would also justify the assertions that are made, promote standardisation, better reflect best practice, and make the document more useful for establishing a 'national context' for heritage.

There are a number of questions about the extent to which current frameworks can be said to be working effectively, and whether or not changes to the HA process would actually be beneficial in terms of improving the quality and relevance of the documents. In order to advance HA at DOC, I argue that the implementation of a more comparative assessment procedure would be an appropriate way to manage heritage into the future. Respondents were hesitant about the further integration of comparative analysis into the HA process, and it was revealed that a number of underlying assumptions about comparative analysis exist that would need to be addressed. The paradigm that the importance of a site can be established through the analysis of that site in isolation is problematic, particularly as this site or 'place based' approach is one used in many New Zealand heritage agencies. By establishing the values of historic heritage in relation to similar sites from New Zealand or the world, the importance and relevance of historic heritage would be established and management decisions critically justified. Furthermore, the implementation of a more comparative assessment procedure would allow for DOC to gain a better understanding of the national scope of the heritage portfolio.

While the central concern of this dissertation was an examination of the current HA process at DOC and the place and form that HA could take, it also uncovered a number of unexpected findings. While they are not directly related to HA, they are relevant to DOC and heritage management in the future. Based on the evidence presented, this dissertation argues that heritage practitioners and those who comment upon heritage practice at an academic/theoretical level need to interact more. Heritage praxis would be advanced through the advocacy of debate aimed in both directions, theory and practice, thus progressing New Zealand heritage management towards the sphere of 'applied theory and theorised practice' (Labrum and McCarthy 2005, 9). That is to say we need research that is not so far removed from practice, and practice that is more aware of the theoretical or academic discourse and the implications of working within these frameworks which would help with the further integration of two currently very separate fields. In its own way this study has made a contribution to heritage studies in New Zealand and beyond. Analysing problems in local heritage practice in relation to gaps in the international literature, it increased our understanding of heritage management by critically analysing it in a theoretically informed way. For example, in the context of DOC's over-arching and unified position as manager of both natural *and*

historic heritage, I have suggested the adoption of a more holistic management system is something for DOC to consider, particularly as understandings of historic heritage, its place in the natural landscape, and the connections that people have to it continue to change. Theories of cultural landscapes that have been used in other countries may help to bridge this gap in current practice, enabling staff to deal more effectively with birds, plants, buildings, machines and all the other different sites that they are mandated to manage.

Underpinning much of this analysis is the fact that limited funding for heritage has an effect upon nearly every aspect of the HA process, from carrying out research through to maintenance. This study has revealed that DOC heritage managers are constantly challenged by the need to manage heritage appropriately and effectively, despite the sometimes prohibitive costs of doing so, and it became apparent that the idea of heritage 'paying its way' has some, yet still comparatively limited, traction at DOC. Yet there is an inherent issue in the adaptive reuse of a building, or the assignment of a heritage place as a visitor site, in that while these places can be seen as 'paying their way,' it is not without cost to the heritage value of that place. I would assert that, if DOC were to carry out HA within a more comparative framework, it would significantly enhance its ability to make a more informed decision on which sites would be appropriate for reuse or as attractions. DOC is also faced with the problem of quantifying the economic and social benefits and values of heritage. More work needs to be carried out in this area, and while it is merely flagged as an issue in this dissertation, I would point out that any decision to apply economic, quantitative or social science paradigms to heritage, without taking into account its essentially qualitative and social dimensions, risks the value of that very heritage.

Respondents interviewed in this study see DOC advancing into the role of heritage advocate, placing emphasis upon educating the public about heritage, and encouraging community groups to become involved in heritage management and governance. Based on a comparative assessment framework, and focussed upon value propositions, heritage could be progressively established as relevant to all of New Zealand society, thus encouraging public involvement and support. While gaining an idea of the ways in which DOC respondents see the HA process, where its strengths and weaknesses lie, and where they see it moving in future seems like a relatively straightforward process,

this research has argued that it is not. The HA process underpins a great deal of the work that is carried out at DOC, and rightly so. Being able to effectively assess and assign value to heritage is at the heart of heritage management decision making. Further engagement and discussion of the process is imperative to the inadequacies being addressed and the adequacies being upheld, and further engagement with the issues discussed here will help to resolve the problems.

Lastly, heritage assessment is an essential topic for all heritage management agencies to address, as it represents a necessary, some might argue pivotal, element of heritage practice. This study concludes that appropriate and sustainable outcomes for heritage at DOC can only be reached in the context of an effective heritage assessment framework, and that the current procedure does not achieve this to a suitable standard. Addressing this situation, in a space between theory and practice would mean to accomplish ‘the art of the achievable’, and to provide gains for New Zealand heritage and society.

Appendix One

Historic Places Act 1993

According to the HPA a *historic place*—

- (a) means—
 - (i) any land (including an archaeological site); or
 - (ii) any building or structure (including part of a building or structure); or
 - (iii) any combination of land and a building or structure; or
 - (iv) any combination of land, buildings or structures, and associated buildings or structures (including any part of those buildings or structures, or associated buildings or structures)—that forms a place that is part of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand and lies within the territorial limits of New Zealand; and
- (b) includes anything that is in or fixed to such land

Resource Management Act 1991

Under the RMA (s. 1. Part 3 (7))“*historic heritage*—

- “(a) means those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, deriving from any of the following qualities:
 - “(i) archaeological:
 - “(ii) architectural:
 - “(iii) cultural:
 - “(iv) historic:
 - “(v) scientific:
 - “(vi) technological; and
- “(b) includes—
 - “(i) historic sites, structures, places, and areas; and
 - “(ii) archaeological sites; and
 - “(iii) sites of significance to Maori, including wahi tapu; and
 - “(iv) surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources.”

Appendix Two

Interviewees

Andrew Blanshard, Department of Conservation Historic Ranger

Andrew has been working at The Department of Conservation for seven years. He is the Historic Ranger for the Bay of Islands area office. His background is archaeology, with over ten years of excavation experience, including Cultural Resource Management excavation, laser scanning, and GIS.

Maria Butcher, Department of Conservation Visitor and Historic Ranger

Maria has been the Visitor and Historic Ranger at the Whangarei area office for three years, where her position involves promoting and maintaining visitor sites as well as historic sites. She has a background in archaeology.

Paul Mahoney, Department of Conservation Historic Technical Advisor

Paul has worked in heritage management professionally since 1982, but argues that nobody is a professional in heritage management. He has worked for the Department of Conservation for 21 years having taken a position in 1991. His background is civil engineering.

Richard Nester, Department of Conservation Historic Technical Advisor

Richard has worked at the Department of Conservation for 15 years in different positions ranging from technical support positions to his current position. He does not have a background in heritage, but learning on the job has given him an insight into heritage management on the ground. His role is based around giving best practice advice to staff carrying out the delivery work.

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