

Auckland Town Hall

Garry Law





The site as it was

In the late 1800's Auckland lacked a town hall

The city offices and the council meetings were held in the city library / art gallery building

His Majesty's Theatre of 1902 delivered a performance theatre

First discussed 1872 ironically for the eventual site

Funding first approved 1879

Much controversy over site and proceeding at all for years afterward

1900 referenda on buying a site and on building a hall both defeated

1906 new funding and a decision for a design competition

Called for city offices and a council meeting room

Winning design was described by an opponent as "like a deformed wedge of cheese or a decrepit flat iron."

Tenders were vastly in excess of the £60,000 funding

Mayor Meyers stifled criticism by saying it would give relief to the unemployed





The winning design

A design competition was held

JJ and EJ Clark of Melbourne were the winners

Of Italian Renaissance Revival style

Clad in Oamaru stone on a rusticated base of Melbourne bluestone.

The winning design had a brick exterior but the Council decided on Oamaru stone

It was built by Ferguson and Malcolm of Auckland. Cost £126,000 to construct

No clock was budgeted but one was gifted by now former Mayor Sir Arthur Meyers.

Opened 1911

HNZPT Category 1 Historic Place.



Figure 3.7. The Melbourne Hospital 1916, J.J. & E.J. Clark Architects.
Source: RMH Archives.

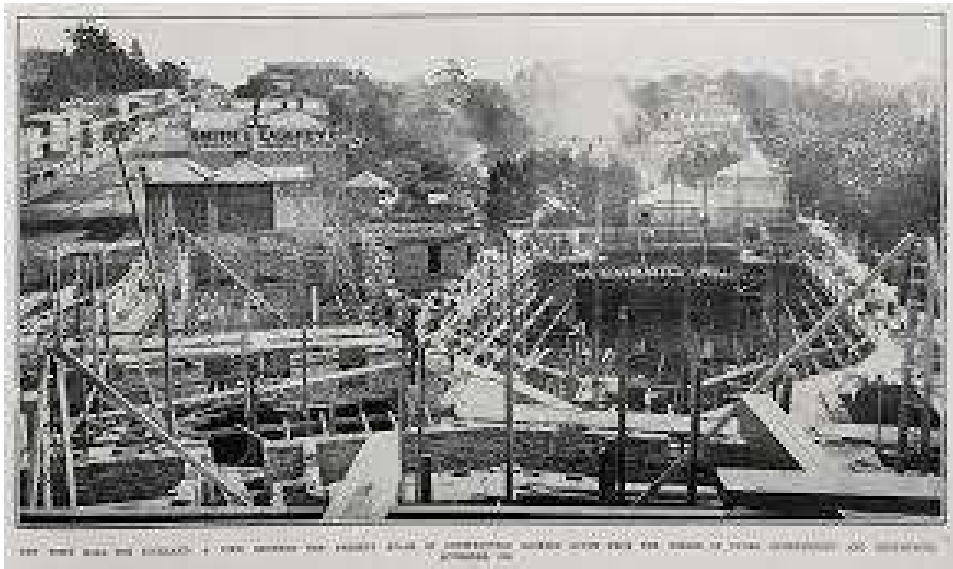
Melbourne Hospital

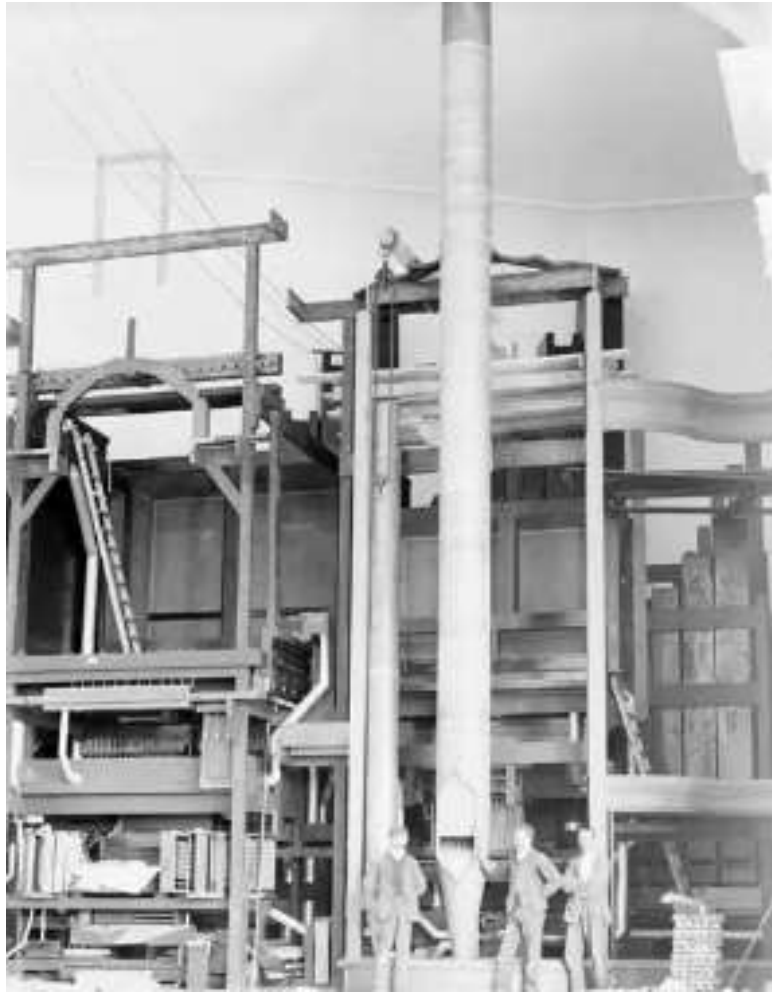
JJ and EJ Clark

Melbourne Public Baths



In construction





Organ installation



REPAIRS TO THE TOWN CLOCK
Workmen removing one of the hands of the north face of the Town Hall clock
for repairs yesterday morning.

Clock Repairs 1935



With Sir George Grey



Trivia Question for Aucklanders:

- Where is the statue now?



With Sir Dove Meyer Robinson



Ladies who lunch. Atwaters rooftop garden.

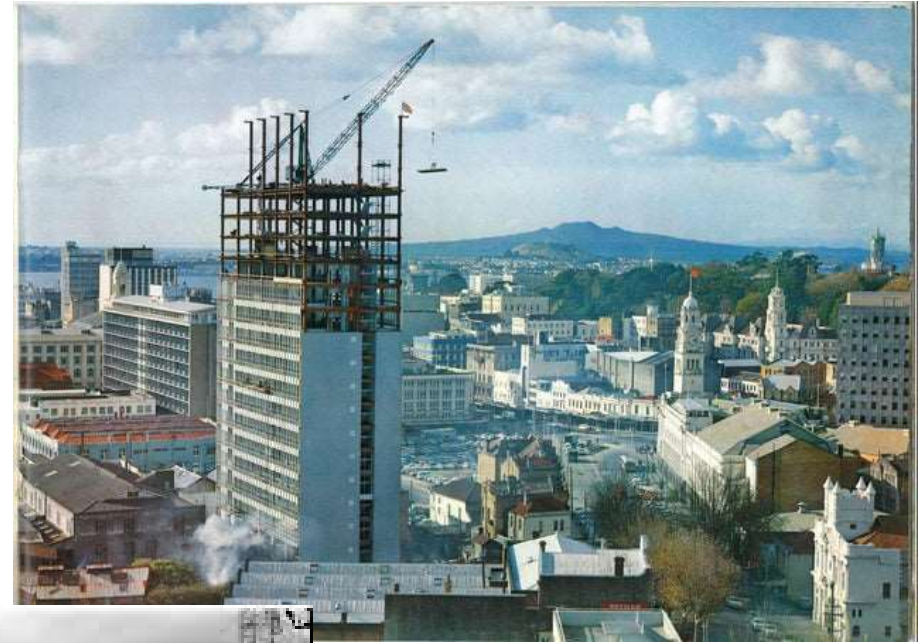


Protests 2022

Encroachments



Underground car park 1974



Civic Administration Building 1965



Aotea Centre 1985

Restorations

The Town Hall's interior was extensively restored from 1994–1997 at a cost of \$33M

In 2007, the exterior underwent additional restoration work



A steel truss to tie the tower to the rest of the structure 1997.





The organ after the restoration in 2010

The Organ

The Town Hall Organ, dating from 1911, is the largest musical instrument in the country. Donated by Sir Henry Brett, NZ Herald proprietor.

It was extensively remodeled in 1969–1970 when the organ reform movement prevailed reducing its original Romantic-era power, discarding many parts of the original, and adding new ones to produce a then-fashionable Baroque sound.

The resulting compromised instrument was dismantled in January 2008 for restoration and rebuilding. The rebuilt organ, incorporating remaining parts of the 1911 original, It returned to the Great Hall in 2008 and was reassembled as the country's largest (and once again most powerful), organ.

Auckland City provided NZ\$3 million to the restoration project, with a \$500,000 remainder obtained via private fundraising.

Famous Occasions



Civic Reception for the Beatles 1964



Civic Reception for Lowe and Hillary 1953

Infamous

- Queen St unemployed riot 1932.
- Free concert riot 1984.



Friendly Road broadcasts. These choirs conducted by broadcaster Thomas Garland ('Uncle Tom'). From the the 1930s, mainly to sing for the services of his non-denominational radio church, of Methodist missionary Colin Scrimgeour ('Uncle Scrim'). Continued until the 1960s.

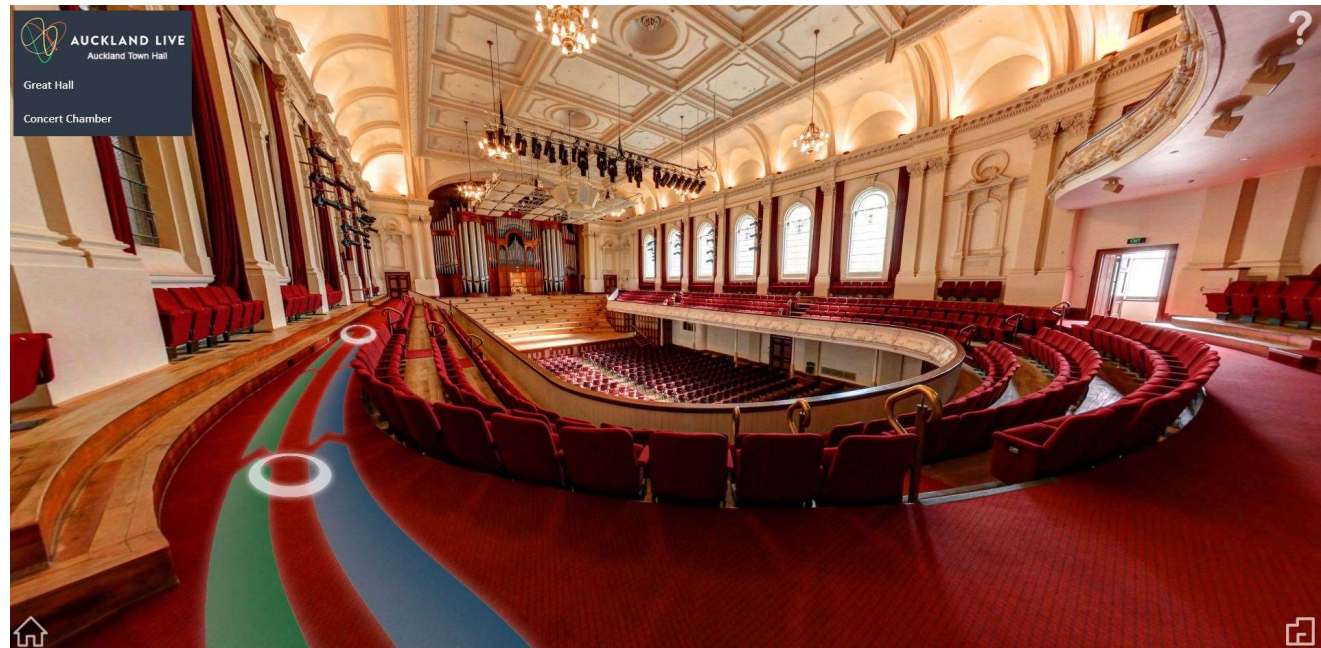
Some personal memories:

- Auckland Symphonia – many times
- Nina and Fredrick
- Pete Seeger
- Israel Philharmonic Orchestra
- My wife's graduation

Interiors



Great Hall



Interiors



Concert Chamber



The Old Council Chamber



Lobby stairs



As it is



Three clock towers

Trivia question for Aucklanders:

- Which clocks strike the hours?
- Which clocks chime the quarters?

End