

# Provenance of Land

## *Wellington Monthly Meeting Premises*

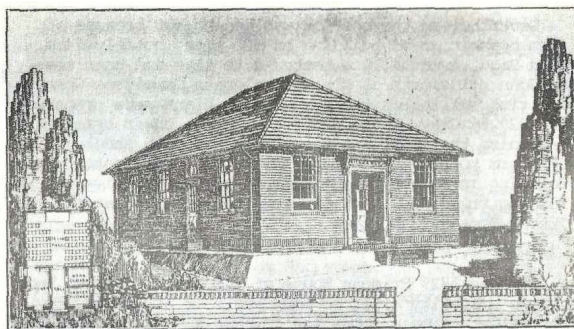
BY LUCAS DAVIES AND QUENTIN ABRAHAM

**Wellington Monthly Meeting's premises sit at the head of the Moncrieff Street cul-de-sac in the Mount Victoria suburb. Prior to the 1820s, Mount Victoria was mainly inhabited by descendants of the explorer Whātonga, including Ngāi Tara, Ngāti Ira, Rangitāne, Muaūpoko, and Ngāti Apa. The name Whanganui-a-Tara derives from the name of Whātonga's son, Tara, who first settled in Wellington harbour hundreds of years ago.**

In the 1820s, various Taranaki Māori – led by the rangatira Te Rauparaha and his family – invaded and settled in Whanganui-a-Tara, marrying into the descendants of Whātonga. At the time the New Zealand Company arrived in Whanganui-a-Tara in 1839, there was still ongoing dispute between the iwi and hapū living here about who had mana whenua over different parts of the harbour.

In 1839, Edward Wakefield's New Zealand Company negotiated with members of various iwi and hapū in Whanganui-a-Tara to purchase land for settlement. By October 1839, the Company purported to have purchased the entirety of Wellington harbour (with one-tenth of the land reserved for Māori). In 1842, Governor William Hobson commissioned an inquiry into the validity of the Company's purchase; in 1843, this inquiry found that the purchase was almost completely invalid. The Crown nonetheless decided to uphold the Company's purchase on the condition that it paid out further specified compensation to local iwi and hapū. Later in the 1840s, the Crown purchased the Company's properties in Wellington. The Waitangi Tribunal has since found that the Crown's handling of the New Zealand Company's purchase breached its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

Close to the site of our meeting house were the Te Aro Pā, the Akatarewa Pā, and a stream that flowed down neighbouring Elizabeth Street. Given this, it is likely that the site of our meeting house was either inhabited by local Māori or otherwise cultivated for vegetables.



Architect's Sketch and Ground Plan.

Wellington Monthly Meeting's premises are comprised of five buildings. On 7 Moncrieff Street we have Friends House, which was built in 1929 with the financial and technical support of British Friends. Before 1929, Wellington Quakers met in a public hall that they rented. Friends House was designed by architect William Gray Young and built by the firm Trevor Brothers.

Today, the main room in Friends House can hold about 80 people seated. This room has always been where Wellington Quakers have held their Meetings for Worship and Business, except where Friends House was out of action. Friends House also includes a kitchenette and a small library.

Constructed of brick, Friends House was subject to considerable earthquake strengthening work between March and July 2016, bringing it up to the Council Code.

Also on 7 Moncrieff Street are a small Studio (formerly used for Children's Meetings) and the Quaker Centre. The Quaker Centre was built in the 1990s and includes a kitchen. It has been used for the social aspects of Quaker life, such as after Meeting coffees and presentations.

George Fox House is at 8 Moncrieff Street. This is the residence of Wellington's Resident Friends. It also includes a guesthouse, which offers affordable bed and breakfast for Friends travelling to and through Wellington. On 8A Moncrieff Street is a flat that is currently let out to a group of Young Friends (and their friends) as affordable accommodation.

Friends have no need of ornamentation, spires, and steeples. It is a privilege to have these places in which to worship and foster our community. Early Friends will have been complicit with other settlers, knowingly or unknowingly in building on this land. Our Advices and Queries remind us to:

Remember our obligation to honour the status of Māori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa and partners in the Treaty of Waitangi. Seek to discover the effects of the colonial and postcolonial history of Aotearoa. Work to ensure that the sharing of power and resources in our society is a genuine partnership.