Victoria Street HHA – Full Statement

Development Dates

- European development from around 1864

City Extension

- Within the original Hamilton West Highway District, and consequently within the original Borough

Background

Background (Historic, Cultural and Archaeological Qualities)

The current Victoria Street area was one of first areas settled by Māori and later by European settlers, with it being easily accessible to the Waikato River.

The Hamilton area has a history of some 700-800 years of Māori occupation and settlement. For the Tainui tribes, the harbours, rivers and swamps of Waikato provided food and other resources, and its mountain ranges were strongholds. As waka traffic increased along the rivers in the 19th century, the number of riverbank settlements multiplied. On the west side of the River the main Māori settlements (Pa) in the area of Hamilton were Kirikiriroa Pa occupied by Ngāti Wairere, and Te Rapa (near the present Waikato Hospital) occupied by Ngāti Koura.

Kirikiriroa Pa was the largest settlement in the area and had a large population. It was a thriving community at the time the European traders and missionaries arrived in the area in the 1830's.

In 1864, following the Māori wars, a number of defensive militia posts were established throughout the Region, including Hamilton. The establishment of the European settlement of Hamilton began with arrival of the first detachment of soldiers from the 4th Waikato Militia.

They built redoubts on opposite sides of the river, on the western side on the hill known to the local iwi as Pukerangiora, on which the St Peters Cathedral is now located and on the eastern side of the river at the end of Bridge Street.

The original European settlement straddled the western and eastern sides of the River. They were connected by punt and developed as two separate towns, known as 'Highway Township Districts'. Each was administered by a separate Highway Board.

The business area was initially located on Grantham Street close to the wharf, which was a key junction for the movement of people and goods into and out of the area. Improved road links to Auckland and the wider area led to a decreased dependency on river transport, and the commercial centre gradually moved from Grantham Street to Victoria Street. In 1865 the original Hamilton Hotel building was erected on the Corner of Victoria and Sapper Moore Jones Streets (2023 locational reference) and additional development followed. In 1875, with the steady growth of the town's population, Hamilton had a printing press (the Waikato Times), breweries, brickyards, biscuit manufactures, agricultural suppliers, saddlers, tailors, sawmills, flour mills and both vehicle and furniture factories.

In 1877 the Highways Boards were amalgamated and became the Hamilton Borough, which established its Chambers on the western side of the River in 1878. The original Union Bridge was constructed in 1879, physically linking the two areas (replaced by the existing Victoria Bridge in 1910). The rail station opened the same year, although delays in the construction of the Claudelands Bridge led to it being closed from 1881 to 1884 until the bridge was completed.

Between 1874 and 1899 there were five major fires in this area of Victoria Street, destroying a number of the original buildings and businesses. In response the Borough introduced building regulations requiring buildings in the Victoria Street to be of brick or stone construction.

It was also the original location for a number of important civic buildings and the location of a number of significant Hotels; these buildings have shaped the City as we see it today. It remains a significant location within the city centre and supports a wide range of daytime and night-time activities.

Whilst shown on the 1895 plan, the examination of survey and subdivision plans indicates that the creation of smaller lots in Hood Street came later, in the early 20th Century.

The Victoria Street and Hood Street area is an important example of the Pioneer Development (1860 to 1889) development period, illustrating the development and consolidation of Hamilton East and West areas, linked to the military settlement of the area, the significant role of the River and the early establishment of a service town. The area includes the 200+m by 200+m superblocks which are a key feature of the development period.

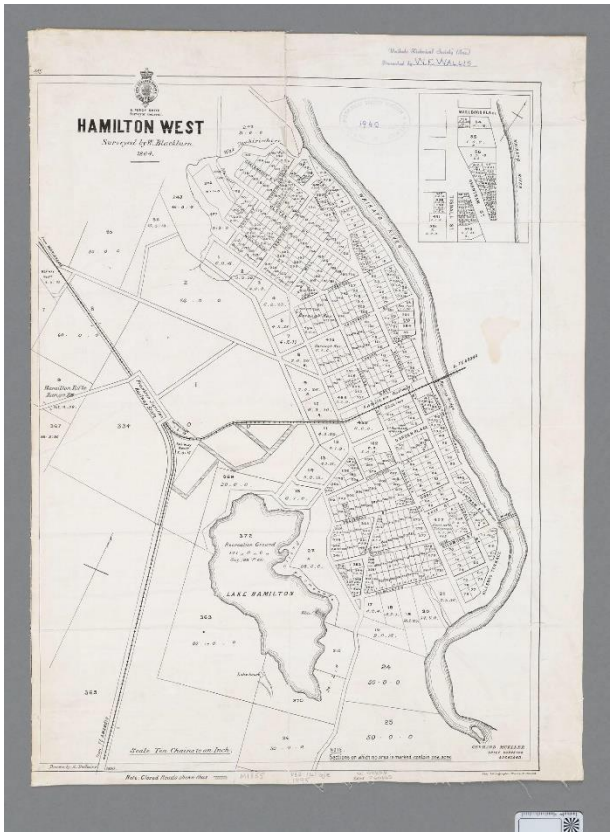

Figure 75 Hamilton West – drawn 1895

Figure 76 Victoria Street in early 1900's looking south from near St Peter's Cathedral (HCL_02820)

Buildings and Streetscape Elements (Architectural, Scientific and Technical Qualities)

All buildings in the area are generally built on the back edge of the footpath and many are two storeys or taller and provide enclosure and definition to the street. At ground level the narrow shop fronts provide rhythm in the frontages and contribute to the creation of a human scale. They provide interest to pedestrians by bringing the opportunity for a diversity of ownership and uses.

The utilisation of painted plaster or brick elevations on most buildings illustrates the requirement that buildings be constructed in brick or stone. This helps to provide continuity and a sense of identity, as do the verandahs over the footpath. The latter also provide shelter for users, continuity along the street and also contribute to the sense of enclosure within the street.

Five buildings within the area are included in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero of significant heritage places.

The area has significant townscape interest, with careful attention having been paid to the design of corner buildings, which assist with the creation of distinct spaces at intersections,

and arrangement of buildings to terminate views from side streets.

Development within Hood Street came later. A number of the commercial buildings are lower scale, reflecting their location away from the main street area, and also reflecting the styles of commercial buildings seen within commercial centres located away from the CBD at a similar time. The buildings represent the Late Victorian and Edwardian and during and after inter-war growth (1890 to 1949) development period.

The design of the streetscape within Victoria Street, the associated trees and landscaping, and the two landmark sculptures within the street (the Sapper Moore-Jones and Tongue of the Dog sculptures) add a further dimension of interest to the area and contribute to its overall significance. Whilst sites have been redeveloped, and buildings changed,overall the form of the buildings and area in general remains representative of the Pioneer Development (1860 to 1889) development period.

Figure 77 Retrolens 1948

The Victoria Street area contributes to a clear understanding and appreciation of the development expected in the Pioneer development period and exhibits Outstanding heritage significance as one of the first areas settled by Māori and later by European settlers, with it being easily accessible to the Waikato River. Victoria Street and Hood Street are one of the first established areas of the city.

The original ‘super block’ subdivision pattern is still apparent and retains its integrity, with subsequent subdivisions not harming the overall integrity of the Pioneer period urban morphology. Whilst the built form within the area has developed over time, buildings in the area are generally built on the back edge of the footpath and many are two storeys or taller and provide enclosure and definition to the street, with narrow shop fronts providing rhythm in the frontages. The utilisation of painted plaster or brick elevations on most buildings illustrates the historic regulation requiring that buildings be constructed in brick or stone; this contributes to the continuity and sense of identity of the area. A number of the buildings are included on the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga List.

In order for the existing values of the HHA to be maintained, it is important that future development incorporate the following features:

- Buildings should be two storey or taller.
- In Victoria Street and on the north side of Hood Street buildings should be built to the back edge of the footpath.

- On the south side of Hood Street, buildings should respect the existing setback on each site.
- Buildings should utilise painted plaster and brick elevations.
- Developments which span more than one existing street fronting lot should be designed to present a differently designed frontage to the street for the width of each existing lot.
- Ground floor street frontages should be divided into a series of narrow shop fronts, which comply with the broad principles and traditional shop front design, to provide interest to passersby.

Heritage Assessment Criteria:

a. Historic Qualities

The place or area is directly associated with, or has a direct relationship to, an important person, group, institution, event or activity, or reflects important aspects of local, regional or national history, including development and settlement patterns, transportation routes and social or economic trends.

The area has at times been associated with the Hamilton Highway District Board, and successive local government in the area. The original (Council) Chambers constructed in 1878 consisted of two military huts with a facade and were located on Victoria Street Opposite Garden Place on the north side of the later built Carnegie Library. In 1905 new Council Chambers and a Town Hall were erected and opened at the south end of Victoria Street near the Municipal Pools.

The current Victoria Street area was one of first areas settled by Māori and later by European settlers, with it being easily accessible to the Waikato River.

The Hamilton area has a history of some 700-800 years of Māori occupation and settlement. For the Tainui tribes, the harbours, rivers and swamps of Waikato provided food and other resources, and its mountain ranges were strongholds. As waka traffic increased along the rivers in the 19th century, the number of riverbank settlements multiplied. On the west side of the River the main Māori settlements (Pa) in the area of Hamilton were Kirikiriroa Pa occupied by Ngati Wairere, and Te Rapa (near the present Waikato Hospital) occupied by Nagti Koura.

Kirikiriroa Pa was the largest settlement in the area and had a large population. It was a thriving community at the time the European traders and missionaries arrived in the area in the 1830's.

In 1864, following the Māori wars, a number of defensive militia posts were established throughout the Region, including Hamilton. The establishment of the European settlement of Hamilton began with arrival of the first detachment of soldiers from the 4th Waikato Militia. They built redoubts on opposite sides of the river, on the western side on the hill known to the local iwi as Pukerangiora, on which the St Peters Cathedral is now located and on the eastern side of the river at the end of Bridge Street.

The original European settlement straddled the western and eastern sides of the River. They were connected by punt and developed as two separate towns, known as 'Highway Township Districts'. Each was administered by a separate Highway Board.

The business area was initially located on Grantham Street close to the wharf, which was a key junction for the movement of people and goods into and out of the area. Improved road links to Auckland and the wider area led to a decreased dependency on river transport, and

the commercial centre gradually moved from Grantham Street to Victoria Street. In 1865 the original Hamilton Hotel building was erected on the Corner of Victoria and Sapper Moore Jones Streets (2023 locational reference) and additional development followed. In 1875, with the steady growth of the town's population, Hamilton had a printing press (the Waikato Times), breweries, brickyards, biscuit manufactures, agricultural suppliers, saddlers, tailors, sawmills, flour mills and both vehicle and furniture factories.

In 1877 the Highways Boards were amalgamated and became the Hamilton Borough, which established its Chambers on the western side of the River in 1878. The original Union Bridge was constructed in 1879, physically linking the two areas (replaced by the existing Victoria Bridge in 1910).

The rail station opened the same year, although delays in the construction of the Claudelands Bridge led to it being closed from 1881 to 1884 until the bridge was completed.

Between 1874 and 1899 there were five major fires in this area of Victoria Street, destroying a number of the original buildings and businesses. In response the Borough introduced building regulations requiring buildings in the Victoria Street to be of brick or stone construction.

It was also the original location for a number of important civic buildings and the location of a number of significant Hotels; these buildings have shaped the City as we see it today. It remains a significant location within the city centre and supports a wide range of daytime and night-time activities.

Whilst shown on the 1895 plan, the examination of survey and subdivision plans indicates that the creation of smaller lots in Hood Street came later, in the early 20th Century.

The Victoria Street and Hood Street area is an important example of the Pioneer Development (1860 to 1889) development period, illustrating the development and consolidation of Hamilton East and West areas, linked to the military settlement of the area, the significant role of the River and the early establishment of a service town. The area includes the 200+m by 200+m superblocks which are a key feature of the development period.

The place has **outstanding regional** historic qualities.

b. Physical/Aesthetic/Architectural Qualities

The place or area is a notable or representative example of:

(i) A significant development period or activity; and/or

(ii) Distinctive or special attributes of an aesthetic or functional nature; and/or

(iii) The work of a notable architect, designer, engineer or builder.

The built form within the area has developed over time, as the 'super-grid' has been developed, subdivided and filled over a period of 150 years. However throughout this time, the supergrid has remained a constant feature.

Each stage of development has responding to the differing expectations and aspirations of owners and Hamilton residents. Although its roots are in the Pioneer Development (1860 to 1889) development period, the area has responded to the expectations of residents and owner in each subsequent development period.

All buildings in the area are generally built on the back edge of the footpath and many are two storeys or taller and provide enclosure and definition to the street. At ground level the

narrow shop fronts provide rhythm in the frontages and contribute to the creation of a human scale. They provide interest to pedestrians by bringing the opportunity for a diversity of ownership and uses.

The utilisation of painted plaster or brick elevations on most buildings illustrates the requirement that buildings be constructed in brick or stone. This helps to provide continuity and a sense of identity, as do the verandahs over the footpath. The latter also provide shelter for users, continuity along the street and also contribute to the sense of enclosure within the street.

The area has significant townscape interest, with careful attention having been paid to the design of corner buildings, which assist with the creation of distinct spaces at intersections, and arrangement of buildings to terminate views from side streets.

Development within Hood Street came later. A number of the commercial buildings are lower scale, reflecting their location away from the main street area, and also reflecting the styles of commercial buildings seen within commercial centres located away from the CBD at a similar time. The buildings represent the Late Victorian and Edwardian and during and after inter-war growth (1890 to 1949) development period.

The design of the streetscape within Victoria Street, the associated trees and landscaping, and the two landmark sculptures within the street (the Sapper Moore-Jones and Tongue of the Dog sculptures) add a further dimension of interest to the area and contribute to its overall significance. Whilst sites have been redeveloped, and buildings changed, overall the form of the buildings and area in general remains representative of the Pioneer Development (1860 to 1889) development period.

It is significant that the buildings in the area are of masonry construction, responding to local requirements buildings be constructed in brick or stone, responding earlier building fires in the area.

The buildings are of interest in so much as they are typical buildings of their period, rather than being designed by a particular known practitioner.

The place has **outstanding regional** physical/aesthetic/archaeological qualities.

c. Context Qualities

The place or area is an important landmark or feature or contributes to or is associated with a wider historical theme, traditional, or cultural context, or physical setting.

The place has **unassessed** context qualities.

d. Technological Qualities

The place or area shows a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular time, is directly associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements, or is associated with scientific "break-through". The place uses unique or uncommon building materials, or demonstrates an innovative method of construction, or is an early example of the use of a particular building technique.

The place has **no known** technological qualities.

e. Archaeological Qualities

The potential of the place or area to define or expand knowledge of earlier human occupation, activities or events through investigation using archaeological methods, or to provide evidence to address archaeological research questions. For example, but not limited to: The place or area is registered by Heritage New Zealand for its archaeological values, or

is recorded by the New Zealand Archaeological Association Site Recording Scheme, or is an 'archaeological site' as defined by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

Subdivision in the local area occurred from the mid- 19th Century. There are known archaeological sites alongside the River and within the area.

It is likely that the place could provide evidence to address archaeological research questions.

There are archaeological records which relate to the HHA.

Five buildings within the area are included in the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero of significant heritage places.

The place has **outstanding local** archaeological qualities.

f. Cultural Qualities

The place or area is important or significant:

(i) As a focus of cultural sentiment; and/or

(ii) As a context for community identity or sense of place, and provides evidence of social,

cultural or historical continuity; and/or

(iii) For having symbolic or commemorative significance to people who use or have used it, or to the descendants of such people. The place or area has a high degree of interpretative potential to increase understanding of past lifestyles or events.

The area is part of the city centre of Hamilton, the area has always been a focus for civic governance and community activity. There is therefore sentiment associated with this.

As part of the city centre, the area is a critical element in the community identity and sense of place of Hamilton as a whole. It provides evidence of cultural and historical continuity.

There is the potential for the area to continue to provide information for the community regarding the history and development of Hamilton.

The place has **high regional** cultural qualities.

g. Scientific Qualities

The potential for the place or area to contribute scientific information about how the natural environment has influenced, events, phases or activities related to development.

The place has **no known** scientific qualities.

Summary Table of Heritage Values

The place is considered to have heritage significance in relation to the following criteria:

Heritage Criteria	Significance	Context
a) Historic Qualities	Outstanding	Regional
b) Physical/Aesthetic/ Architectural Qualities	Outstanding	Regional
c) Context Qualities	Not assessed	
d) Technological Qualities	None	
e) Archaeological Qualities	Outstanding	Local
f) Cultural Qualities	High	Regional
g) Scientific Qualities	None	

Statement of Significance

Victoria Street and Hood Street are one of the first established areas of the city. The area was laid out as a grid of streets and the resulting blocks remain the key feature of the urban morphology of the area.

Overall, the area contributes to a clear understanding and appreciation of the development expected in the Pioneer development period and exhibits Outstanding heritage significance as one of the first areas settled by Māori and later by European settlers, with it being easily accessible to the Waikato River. The original 'super block' subdivision pattern is still apparent and retains its integrity, with subsequent subdivisions not harming the overall integrity of the Pioneer period urban morphology. Whilst the built form within the area has developed over time, buildings in the area are generally built on the back edge of the footpath and many are two storeys or taller and provide enclosure and definition to the street, with narrow shop fronts providing rhythm in the frontages. The utilisation of painted plaster or brick elevations on most buildings illustrates the historic regulation requiring that buildings be constructed in brick or stone; this contributes to the continuity and sense of identity of the area. A number of the buildings are included on the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga List.