

Is Our Heritage Falling Through the Gaps?

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<https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2023206>

Abstract

When it comes to an urban environment, the first things that often come to mind are the buildings, structures and spaces that surround us and have meaning for us. In Aotearoa New Zealand, we also have explicitly significant buildings and structures that we consider part of our heritage, despite being relatively young compared to many other nations. The country's cultural heritage sites, buildings and objects are treasures of distinctive value. They can be roughly divided into four overlapping categories: archaeological sites, historic buildings and structures, places of significance to Māori, and cultural landscapes.¹ All ethnic groups residing in Aotearoa New Zealand have contributed to the country's cultural heritage, and "the result is an evolving mix of Polynesian, European, and also Asian, ways of seeing and doing, making each new generation of New Zealanders slightly different from the previous one and yet intimately linked to it." These heritage sites and buildings are part of our urban and rural environment, and are assets with distinctive value and meaning to both Māori and Pākehā.

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This publication may be cited as:

Vadasz, Viola, Renata Jadresin Milic and Iman Raza Khan. "Is Our Heritage Falling Through the Gaps?" *Asylum 2* (2023): 322–329. <https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2023206>

Published by ePress and
Unitec School of Architecture

epress@unitec.ac.nz
www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/

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ISSN 2463-4190