

Self-Guided City Heritage Walking Tour

Allow approximately 60 minutes



► (Wanganui i-SITE Visitor Centre)

Thain's Warehouse



The Wanganui i-SITE Visitor Centre began its days in 1895 as Thain's Warehouse and was designed by architect Alfred Atkins. Built on reclaimed land by local builder Nicholas Meuli, it was designed to complement the

Foster's building next door being the same height and with matching cornices. It was ideally placed given its proximity to the Town Wharf. Thain's was an import company then described as one of the leading hardware businesses in New Zealand and a reminder of the significant role Whanganui once had as a distribution centre for goods in the Central and West North Island.

With a range of owners utilising the spacious area until 2009, the Wanganui District Council chose to create a new Visitor Information Centre on this part of the riverbank and awarded a design contract to Void Architecture with Mark Southcombe the architect. Original features retained from the old building are the floor, columns, beams and skylight.

1

► Next to the i-SITE on Moutoa Quay

'Mable', the Number 12 Tram

2



The Tramways Wanganui Trust moved the roof of the bright red tram shed to this location as part of a restoration and reintroduction of Whanganui trams. Until 1950 Whanganui's

tram network carried passengers between the outer suburbs, the beach and the CBD. Opened in 1908, Whanganui was the first provincial town to have a tramway, twelve trams were commissioned by the then Mayor Mackay. Today you can see the beautifully restored number 12 tram housed in this shed, gifted to the city by David Harre.

Public rides are available on Sundays from from 11:00am until 3:30pm and children over the age of 75 years can ride for free! The Tramshed is open Wednesdays to Fridays from 11:00am to 5:00pm and on a Saturday from 8:30am to 1:30pm.

The Museum also contains the Tingey Wagon, built about 1900, specifically for the transportation of crates of glass from the Whanganui Wharf to the Tingey Glass premises in Victoria Ave.

www.tramwayswanganui.org.nz

› East along the river boardwalk from the i-SITE

P.S. Waimarie and Hatrick's Wharf

3



Originally called the *Aotea* and restored by Project Waimarie, the *Aotea* was brought to New Zealand as a kitset in 1899. In 1902 she was purchased by Alexander Hatrick's Company. A. Hatrick and Company developed the Whanganui River as a tourist route attracting numerous visitors in the early 1900's. By the end of 1911, the company had 12 large vessels and seven smaller craft operating on the river. Renamed the *Waimarie* (meaning peaceful waters in Māori), the *Waimarie* sank at her moorings in 1952. She was salvaged from the mud directly in front of Hatrick's Wharf in 1993 and restored to her current state.

She is now an iconic visitor attraction in Whanganui with regular summer sailings and hosts special events and charters. Tickets for sailings can be purchased at the i-SITE or the Riverboat Museum. While on board you can experience shovelling the coal to keep the steamer moving or try your hand at piloting this very special vessel.

www.riverboats.co.nz

› Behind the P.S Waimarie mooring, entrance on Taupō Quay

Whanganui River Boat Centre

4



Operating out of the old Wanganui Rowing Club building erected in 1898 and extended in 1905 is the Whanganui Riverboat Centre. The centre was established to support the restored *Waimarie*, New Zealand's last coal fired paddle steamer. Inside the building is a river boat museum containing documents, photographs and memorabilia of the Whanganui River and the river boat era.

Group visits to the centre are welcome although bookings in advance are preferred.

Two other riverboats are available for public excursions – the MV *Wairua*, one of the vessels most used to carry settlers and supplies to the Mangapurua Landing, gateway to the Bridge to Nowhere and the *Adventurer II*. More information can be obtained at the i-SITE.

www.whanganuiriverboat.co.nz

www.adventurer.net.nz

► Across the road from the Riverboat Centre

Moutoa Gardens / Pākaitore

5



This area is known to Whanganui iwi as Pākaitore (*Paikatore* to some); it was the site of a fishing village and gathering place occupied by Whanganui hapū (tribes) from up-river at various times throughout the year. Following European settlement it became known to them as Market Place and was used by both Māori and Europeans for trading. With the establishment of the town it remained as a sanctuary and gathering place for Māori.

In 1965 the 'Moutoa Monument' to commemorate the battle of Moutoa Island was erected by townspeople, grateful that the battle had averted an attack on the town. In 1872 the perimeter of the area was planted with trees.

Although it continued to be used as the landing place for up-river hapū into the 1890s that was eventually stopped and in 1900 the area became known as Moutoa Gardens. It was then developed into the public gardens that exist today. Over the years other monuments have been erected there commemorating Māori including other war memorials to Māori soldiers.

In 1995 Whanganui hapū gathered once more at this site to protest their alienation from the land. This protest resulted in a formal relationship being established in 2001 between Whanganui iwi, Whanganui District Council and the Crown for the management of Pākaitore / Moutoa Gardens.

► Continue up through the park to the Court House at the top and cross the road into Ridgway Street

Wanganui Repertory Theatre

6



This single storey building was opened in 1882 as the Wanganui Library on land made available by the Government. It was extended twice in the 1890s. In 1933 a new library was opened on the hill in Queen's Park and the building then became home to the Wanganui Repertory Theatre Company. Continuing a strong performing arts tradition within Whanganui the theatre is still used regularly for amateur dramatic productions and can be hired as a venue.

www.wanganuirepertorytheatre.co.nz

► Continue along Ridgway Street

Meteor Printers

7



This collection of buildings was built in 1902–1908 and for many years housed the offices of the Waitotara County Council. The large wooden buildings also once housed the office of Whanganui

Mayor Charles Mackay whose contributions to the city are still evident today in the form of the Sarjeant Gallery, The Dublin Street Bridge and the Number 12 Tram.

▶ Continue along Ridgway Street, crossing into Drews Avenue.

Decorative Building Facades

8



Built last century this collection of buildings in Ridgway Street is a fine example of late Victorian and Edwardian architecture. They include The Loyal Wanganui Lodge building at No 32, the

Barnicoat, Treadwell and Gordon building at No 34, and the Empress Building, built on the site of the earlier Empress Theatre at No 36, whose beautiful and original interiors are still largely intact. The Lodge building was built in 1895 and the Empress in 1916 with Barnicoat, Treadwell and Gordon's 1910 offices in the Edwardian era.

▶ At the intersection of Ridgway Street and Victoria Avenue

Rutland Building

9



Located on this site since the early 1850s, The Rutland became one of the nation's best known hotels last century. Fire wreaked havoc in the Rutland on Christmas Day 1868, completely destroying the hotel which

was rebuilt, only to suffer from fire again in the 1880s. The current building was constructed between 1899 and 1904. In the early 1990s it was redeveloped to include retail shops, offices and a bar. On entering, note the elegant black and white tiled entry, the courtyard at rear where stables once were and the inset of crockery shards and tiles.

Now home to the Rutland Arms Inn, accommodation and dining is available. Take a break on your tour if you wish and taste one of the 25 different local, imported and craft beers available.

www.rutlandarms.co.nz

▶ At the intersection of Ridgway Street and Victoria Avenue

The Watt Fountain

10



This fountain in the middle of the intersection was built as a memorial to William Hogg Watt, the first Mayor of Whanganui. Mayor Watt donated Lake Westmere, then on his property, to the town in order to increase water pressure and make fighting fires easier. The fountain was first unveiled on this site on 7 September 1881. It was then removed in 1906 to make way for the new trams that travelled along Victoria Avenue, first to Cook's Gardens and then to Queen's Park in 1933. In 1993 as part of the redevelopment of the town centre the fountain was returned here to its original location. Lake Westmere is now a public reserve.

▶ Turn left down Victoria Avenue

BNZ Bank Building

11



The first BNZ building on this site was built in 1867, a two storey wooden building erected but set on fire accidentally. This later building, an impressive commercial building with strong classical form and detailing, was

erected in 1906. The BNZ opened for business in New Zealand in 1861, the Whanganui branch on 19 August, 1862. Now home to Element Café Bistro and Venue the building has a unique ambience and character.

www.elementcafe.co.nz

› Looking directly across the road

Kitchen's Building

12



The Kitchen's building has links to the township's first pharmacy, 'a small affair' established in Taupō Quay in 1858 by Mr W.T. Owen. This pharmacy moved to larger premises on this site and was operated by five different pharmacists until Mr Kitchen bought it. Erected in 1909 the building remained in the ownership of the Kitchen family until 1981. The original pharmacy occupied the full street depth, with residential accommodation at the back on the ground floor and on the first floor. Stables, lawns, gardens and a laundry were at the rear, with a copper for the family washing.

› Looking directly across the road

Drew's Building

13



The Drew's building was erected in 1909 by the family of Mr S.H. Drew, a manufacturing jeweller and founder of the Whanganui Regional Museum. Drew started business in Taupō Quay where he laid the foundation

for his jewellery and watchmaking business. He died suddenly aged 57 when 'he dropped down dead in his shop.' Natural history and ethnology fascinated him and he made an extensive private collection 'illustrative of the colony.' His collection was purchased in 1892 to form the nucleus of a Whanganui Museum collection in what is now the Savage Club Hall in Drews Avenue. Later, money was raised to build a new regional museum on the present site in Queen's Park.

› Cross at the pedestrian crossing and return up Victoria Ave to the Watt Fountain corner

The Post and Telegraph Building

14



Erected in 1902 this building was once the premises for a General Post Office and the Post and Telegraph Service. It replaced the original timber post office of 1870 and was extended after fire damage in

1881. The new building held a staff of 105 with 12 operators working in the upstairs telegraph room. Whanganui was then the terminus of the cable across Cook Strait from Cable Bay near Nelson and the terminus of the Trans-Tasman Cable. Messages from all over the world were received there, relayed to Whanganui and then sent on to cities in the North Island. After 1940, when the new post office opened next door, this building was used by a variety of Government departments until its renovation as a café and restaurant, now Big Orange Café and Ceramic Lounge.

<http://bigorange.co.nz>

► Turn left into Ridgway Street, continuing along Ridgway Street to the next intersection. Turn right into St Hill Street.

The Royal Wanganui Opera House (15)



Built in 1899 this Opera House is one of New Zealand's last surviving Victorian theatres and the only theatre in New Zealand to have a Royal Charter awarded for the centenary celebration in 1999. It was designed by Wellington architect George Stevenson and commissioned to commemorate Queen Victoria's reign. It was close to the then railway station and the port – the preferred methods of transport by the theatre companies, and has survived three fires. Constructed in five months and unusually for the period, was lit from the beginning with electricity and gas.

Since its opening the Opera House has gained national and international recognition for its beautiful architecture and great acoustics. Still used today for live performances of touring and local artists and shows, take time to treat yourself to some entertainment in a very special building.

www.royaloperahouse.co.nz

► Outside and looking up to your right

The Bell Tower (16)



This six metre high Bell Tower stands on the site of the old York Stockade, one of the defences for the town in its early days. By 1870 the stockade had fallen into disrepair and was sold in 1871. In its place a signal station was built with a

tower alongside housing a fire bell. Each night the fire brigade watchmen would climb to the top of the tower and when a fire was spotted ring the bell. The number of strokes indicated where the fire was burning. In 1891 the first tower was replaced with this current tower and the original 1874 Sheffield fire bell moved into it. In the early 1930s the Post Office tower was condemned and a new home had to be found for its chiming clock. The four bells and chiming mechanism were rehoused here.

► Continue along St Hill Street

Cook's Gardens (17)



The hill in Cook's Gardens was the site of the fighting pā (fortified village), Patupohau. Māori from Taranaki occupied this site while tribes from Whanganui and Taupō were visiting Kapiti Island in 1839.

The reserve was set aside in the original purchase plan of Whanganui town and later used as the York Stockade. This was occupied by officers and men of the 65th Yorkshire Regiment from July 1847. The reserve was named after Captain Cook the famous British Explorer.

In 1896 the Wanganui Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club developed the site into a sports ground, a use which continues to this day. Peter Snell ran his record breaking mile here on January 27 1962, when he broke the then world distance record. A statue commemorating this historic event sits inside the grounds.

www.cooksgardens.org.nz

› Opposite Cook's Gardens entrance

The Jockey Club

18



Now a restaurant, the corner building was constructed in 1919 to house the offices of the Wanganui Jockey Club. The club is the oldest Jockey Club in New Zealand and still uses its original race grounds.

At the end of the First World War Whanganui experienced a construction boom with many new commercial buildings constructed within the city centre. The downstairs was constructed to house various offices; the upstairs was the Jockey Club boardroom. The building has been a restaurant since 1986.

www.beijingrestaurant.co.nz

› Turn right into Maria Place

King's Chambers

19



Built in 1919 by dentist Robert Grummitt and designed by local architect Henry Monk Helm, the building was commissioned to house Grummitt's dental practice and private offices. It is possible the building was named King's Chambers after the then King George V but it is more likely named to commemorate local man Samuel King as Maria Place is named after his sister Maria. The building remained home to a dental practice until the 1950s.

› Continue to the intersection of Maria Place and Victoria Avenue

Perrett's Building

20



This three storey building at the corner of Maria Place and Victoria Avenue was completed in 1918 and recalls English-born gold miner and butcher Edwin Perrett who arrived in Whanganui in 1878. This building was built after Perrett died and did not house the butchery.

In 1891 he bought his butchery from H. Hall and at the rear of his shop installed modern equipment including a sausage machine driven by a steam engine and used three carts to serve the townspeople. The meat was carried in bulk and cut in the opened up rear of the cart as housewives requested. The butcher's shop initially had a sawdust floor, was named the Wanganui Meat Company and managed by one of Perrett's seven sons.

› Opposite the Perrett Building

The National Bank

21



Purpose built for the National Bank of New Zealand in 1930 by Fletcher Construction, using 40,000 bricks, this elegant building was designed by Cyril Mitchell of Atkins and Mitchell, a Wellington firm of architects which started in Whanganui. The interior banking chamber rises through the full height of the building. The interior space remains largely in original condition.

› Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing. Turn right into Victoria Avenue

Williams Jewellers Building 22



64 Victoria Avenue was built for jewellers J. Williams and Co. Ltd and completed in February 1912 to the designs of Thomas Battle, a noted Whanganui architect. James Williams was a watch maker from Hawke's Bay who moved to Whanganui in 1903 and established his own jewellery

business. The business remained within the Williams family long after James's death in 1948 before eventually being sold in the 1990s. It remains an active jewellery studio to this day.

Stepping inside is like walking back in time with some of the original black-stained kauri cabinets still in use.

www.jwilliams.co.nz

› Look to the opposite side of the road

Collier Building 23



Built for H. Collier and Co. Ltd – Direct Importers, this building was completed in 1902 and designed by Thomas Harvey James. Brothers Henry and Herbert Collier were importers of sheet music, pianos and organs and supplied most of the lower North Island. They also conducted piano and organ lessons and had a studio built

on the top floor to teach from. Note the organ motif on the top parapet of the building. Henry's daughter Edith Collier became an artist of national repute, posthumously recognised as one of New Zealand's most significant modernist painters. Many of her works now reside at the Sarjeant Gallery here in Whanganui.

› Return back up Victoria Avenue to Majestic Square, next to the National Bank Building

Majestic Square 24



Named after the magnificent Majestic Theatre which occupied the site from 1912 until demolition in 1979. In the late 1990s the area was turned into a public square.

Note the last remaining fire hydrant at the base of the gas lamp at the front of the square. These hydrants once lined Victoria Avenue and were installed during the time of Whanganui's first Mayor, William Hogg Watt.

› Walk through the square and across the pedestrian crossing on Watt Street

Queen's Park 25



The cultural heart of the city is Queen's Park and includes the Sarjeant Art Gallery building (its collection and displays have been temporarily relocated to Taupō Quay

during earthquake strengthening), the Whanganui Regional Museum, the Wanganui War Memorial Centre, the Davis Library and the Alexander Heritage and Research Library as well as numerous monuments.

The hill has been the site of both Māori and European fortifications. It is known to Māori as Pukenamu (Sandfly Hill) and was the site of a tribal battle in 1832 when the Taranaki tribe Ngāti Te Atiawa attacked the hill manned by Whanganui and Tuwharetoa tribes. By 1846 the 58th Rutlandshire Regiment occupied the hill and built the Rutland Stockade, their occupation continued until 1870. In 1882 the area was taken over by the Council, the stockade was demolished and the area reclaimed for public use.

› **Self-Guided Tour Ends: Queen's Park**

Visit the venues and attractions here in Queen's Park to learn more about Whanganui's heritage and culture.