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International working party for  
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**New International Selection**  
**Full Documentation Fiche 2003**

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**composed by national/regional working party of:**

0. Picture of building/ group of buildings/ urban scheme/ landscape/ garden



depicted item: Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall  
source: Photograph by Lauren Speer  
date: 4 February 2014

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## 1. Identity of building/ group of buildings/ group of buildings/ landscape/ garden

### 1.1 Data for identification

current name: Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall

former/original/variant name: Pioneer Women's and Ellen Melville Memorial Hall

number(s) and name(s) of street(s): 2 Freyberg Place

town: Auckland

province/state: Auckland

post code: 1010

legal description:

LOTS 3 4 DP 19507 PT ALLOTS 4-5 SEC 4 AUCKLAND CITY

Certificate of title number:

CT-718/169, CT-455/121, CT-606/44, CT-720/108

country: New Zealand

national topographical grid reference: n/a

current typology: Auckland Council community hall

former/original/variant typology: Women's community facility

comments on typology: The central Auckland building was purpose-built to provide a facility for use by women and to honour both the pioneering women of Auckland as well as Ellen Melville's success as an Auckland city councillor for 33 years and her efforts to advance women's rights in New Zealand.

### 1.2 Status of protection

protected by: The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall is scheduled by Auckland Council in both the operative Auckland City District Plan – Central Area Section 2005, and the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan 2013.

grade: Category B (in both plans)

date: 2005 (Auckland City District Plan – Central Area Section); and 2013 (Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan).

valid for: whole building, including the exterior and interior, and its surrounds as well as the James Bowie sculpture.

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remarks: Auckland City District Plan – Central Area Section: Schedule Number: 054; Scheduled for its significant architect, design, interior, personnel (history), social context, location and intactness; site protection has been noted with supplementary comments in the plan outlining site restrictions and provisions to change.<sup>1</sup>

Auckland Proposed Unitary Plan: Schedule Number: 01960; Scheduled for historical, social, physical and aesthetic values.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.3 Visually or functionally related building(s)/site(s)

name(s) of surrounding area/building(s): Freyberg Square (1996; designed by Patterson Architects), Lord Freyberg Statue (1978 by artist Anthony Stones), Chancery Precinct (retail precinct), High Street (retail precinct), Metropolis Apartment Tower (1999).

visual relations: The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is a two-storey modernist building. It sits to the north of Freyberg Square, a public space located between two downtown retail precincts – Chancery Precinct to the east and High Street to the west. The hall sits on the square's northern boundary with the building's main entry located in its south-east corner. The building faces towards the south and out over the square towards the Lord Freyberg Statue<sup>3</sup> and Metropolis Apartment Tower. The Metropolis Apartment Tower is the tallest residential tower in New Zealand comprising 40 storeys and it has retained the Old Magistrate Courthouse façade on its lower levels.<sup>4</sup> Collectively these buildings and retail precincts frame Freyberg Square to create a public urban space in the middle of Auckland's CBD.

functional relations: Along with 21 other community centres within central Auckland, the Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is Council owned and operated and is hired out for a wide range of different activities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Auckland Council, 'Appendix 1: Schedule of Buildings, Heritage Properties, Places, Monuments and Objects of Special Value and those subject to Heritage Orders', *Auckland City Council District Plan Operative 2005 – Central Area Section*, Accessed February 7, 2014, pp. 9, 21, <http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/council/documents/central/pdfs/appendix01.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Auckland Council, 'Appendix 9: Schedule of Significant Historic Heritage Places', *Proposed Auckland Council Unitary Plan – Schedule of Significant Heritage Places – Part 1: Historic Heritage Places*, Accessed February 7, 2014, p. 91,

<http://unitaryplan.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Images/September%202013%20version/Appendices%20PDF/Appendix%209/Appendix%209%20-%20Schedule%20of%20significant%20historic%20heritage%20places%2020130913%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> In honour of Lord Bernard Cyril Freyberg (1889-1963) who was Commander of the Second New Zealand Division 1946-1952 and Governor General of New Zealand 1946-1952, a statue was constructed by Anthony Stones and was unveiled at Freyberg Square, Auckland, in 1978. See Public Art Around the World, 'Lord Freyberg Statue', Accessed February 10, 2014, [http://www.publicartaroundtheworld.com/Lord\\_Freyberg\\_Statue.html](http://www.publicartaroundtheworld.com/Lord_Freyberg_Statue.html)

<sup>4</sup> Metropolis Residences, 'The Building', *Metropolis*, Accessed February 10, 2014, <http://www.metropolisresidences.com/thebuilding.html>

<sup>5</sup> Auckland Council, 'Community Halls', Accessed February 10, 2014, <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/parksfacilities/communitycentrehallsandhouses/communityhalls/Pages/central.aspx>

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## 2. History of building(s) etc.

### 2.1 Chronology

commission or competition date: Following the death of city councillor Ellen Melville in 1946, women's groups in Auckland collectively promoted the erection of a hall to honour New Zealand's pioneer women in general and Ellen Melville in particular as an outstanding New Zealand feminist and politician. The site at Freyberg Place was chosen for this purpose in 1954.

design period(s): Conceptual drawings were started in late 1954 after the selection of the site.

Loan approved for the work by the Local Government Loans Board in 1958.

Contract drawings prepared in late 1960 – mid 1961.

start of site work: Tenders called and the contract awarded in June 1961.

Building construction from 1961 – September 1962.

completion/inauguration: The building was officially opened on 5 September 1962 by Mayoress Thelma Robinson and city councillor Mr W. M. Tongue.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.2 Summary of development

commission brief: Following the death of Ellen Melville (1882-1946), a city councillor for 33 years and influential women's rights activist, the Ellen Melville Memorial Hall Committee was established to organise the erection of a hall as a memorial to her and the pioneering women of Auckland. This committee was led by the then Mayoress, Mrs J. A. C. (Annie) Allum. The committee suggested the best location for the hall was to be in central Auckland. In 1947, collaboration between the City Engineer A. J. Dickson and the committee resulted in the selection of a site for the hall in Greys Avenue at the southern end of the city's Civic Centre scheme. This was an open and large site where city architect at the time Tibor K. Donner "noted that the building of about 8,000 square feet was to form part of the Civic Centre".<sup>7</sup>

Work on this site progressed and in 1948 a brochure was published with the aim of raising money for the project. The brochure included a perspective sketch of the hall.<sup>8</sup>

In 1954, however, the Greys Avenue location was abandoned and a new location was found for the hall at Freyberg Place. Tibor Donner was concerned that this new site would be too small with restrictive access while surrounding traffic and noise would also cause problems for the hall's users. Donner suggested that an elevated structure for the hall could be a possible solution to these site constraints. However, he

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<sup>6</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', Heritage Assessment, Auckland, 2003, pp. 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Robin Skinner, 'T. K. Donner: The Architect', BArch thesis, The University of Auckland, 1994, p. 68.

concluded that the site was best to remain as an inner-city open space. The Council dismissed Donner's recommendation to keep the area open for passive recreation and instead selected Freyberg Place for the location of the new memorial to Ellen Melville.<sup>9</sup>

design brief: Although Donner initially considered the site to be unsuitable for the hall, he soon embraced the chosen location and in 1954 produced floor plans for the memorial hall. By September of the same year, he had produced two possible design options. The first was a single-storey building housing a crèche and restroom, with the remainder of the site to become an open courtyard. The second design option for a two-storey structure was ultimately realised. The final design was approved on 29 October 1959 by Mary Russell as Chairman and President of the Hall Committee. The design comprised a two-storey building to be constructed along the north boundary of the site. It would house a crèche and restroom at ground level with a first floor meeting hall and kitchen elevated and supported by columns. The contract drawings were prepared in late 1960 through to mid 1961. These drawings included some design reconfigurations such as simplification of the floor layout in the kitchen and stairwells. Note: during this period, in late 1958 the Local Government Loans Board approved a loan of £18,720 to be contributed by the Auckland City Council towards this project. The Pioneer Women's Hall Committee was to raise and contribute £37,500. Of this sum, £30,000 was donated by the Queen Street Businessmen's Association.<sup>10</sup>

building/construction: The tenders were called in mid-1961 and the contract was awarded to McLeod Construction Co. for £62,998. Construction commenced in July that year.<sup>11</sup>

completed situation: The building was officially opened on 5 September 1962 by Mayoress Thelma Robinson and city councillor Mr W. M. Tongue. Ellen Melville's two friends, Miss E. M. Newton and Miss G. M. Hemus, were the first to enter the building. "Part of the opening included a parade of women in Victorian costume in commemoration of pioneering women ... and was attended by more than 1000 people".<sup>12</sup>

original situation or character of site: The site is in one of the oldest developed areas of the city, "at the end of what was Section 4 of the original subdivision of the city".<sup>13</sup> The history of the site is diverse. It was originally reserved for government purposes including a police station and the first Magistrates Court. From 1881 to 1887, Auckland City Council utilised the existing buildings as its municipal offices. Occupancy from 1887 to the early 1920s is not known, but during the 1920s a motor garage and William Horne Lt. auctioneers occupied the buildings. In 1947, the site was dedicated to Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg (1889-1963) as a garden place reserve. The RSA made the site available to the council for the hall's construction in 1958.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Skinner, 'T. K. Donner', p.68.

<sup>10</sup> Skinner, 'T. K. Donner', p. 181.

<sup>11</sup> Skinner, 'T. K. Donner', p. 181.

<sup>12</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.7.

<sup>13</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.2.

<sup>14</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.2.

### 2.3 Relevant persons/organisations

original owner(s)/patron(s): Auckland City Council

architect(s): Tibor K. Donner (chief architect, Auckland City Council), Ewen M. Wainscott (deputy chief architect, Auckland City Council), R. A. E. Gibson (architect, Auckland City Council).

landscape/garden designer(s): n/a

other designer(s): James Bowie (Artist) for the abstract timber sculpture located in the hall lobby.

consulting engineer(s): A. J. Dickson (City Engineer, Auckland City Council).

building contractor(s): McLeod Construction Co. (main contractors).

The Council's chief architect, Tibor K. Donner, is credited with the design of the Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall. Deputy chief architect, Ewen Wainscott also contributed.<sup>15</sup>

Tibor Karl Donner (1907-1993) was born in Hungary and grew up in Romania. His family moved to New Zealand when he was 21 years old. Unlike many of New Zealand's émigré architects, he studied architecture after his arrival here at Auckland University College rather than in Europe. He worked in private practice from 1932 to 1938; in the Public Works Department/ Ministry of Works from 1938 to 1948, on both civilian and military/defence projects including military hospitals; and for the Auckland City Council from 1948 to 1967. It is in the latter capacity that he is best known, with key works including the Khyber Pump Station (1947), Parnell Baths (1951-57), Civic Building (1954-66) and Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall (1958-62). His official title was chief architect (with lower case letters), working under the City Engineer.<sup>16</sup> Donner's own house and associated studio buildings in the west Auckland suburb of Titirangi (1947) are also much admired, particularly as the site where he experimented with and made ceramic tiled building elements.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.4 Other persons or events associated with the building(s)/site

name(s): Eliza Ellen Melville (known as Ellen; 1882-1946) was born in Tokatoka, northern Wairoa. As one of seven children, Melville attended Tokatoka School and Auckland Girls' Grammar School. She then studied law at Auckland University College. In 1906 Melville became the second woman admitted to the bar in New Zealand (after Ethel Benjamin). She established her professional career in the formation of her sole practice where she turned her focus towards the advancement of women. In her role of advocating for women's rights and the feminist movement in New Zealand, she contributed significantly to the

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<sup>15</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.12.

<sup>16</sup> Robin Skinner, 'Disarticulated High Rise: The Auckland City Administration Building', *Habitus 2000* (conference), 2000, p.2.

<sup>17</sup> For information on the Donner House, Parnell Baths, Civic Building and Ellen Melville Hall, see Julia Gatley (ed.), *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008), pp. 47, 78, 117, 149.

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formation of the YWCA Women's Club in Auckland in 1911; became the first president of the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCW) in 1919; was a representative at the Pan-Pacific Women's Association in Honolulu in 1934; and was an active member of the Auckland Women's Club, the New Zealand Society for the Protection of Women and Children, and the Women's Forum during the 1930s.<sup>18</sup>

Melville was also very active in local government. In 1913, she was elected to the Auckland City Council and in doing so became the first woman councillor in New Zealand. She also ran for parliament by contesting the Grey Lynn seat for the Reform Party over the course of several elections. However, she was unsuccessful in this endeavour. She was considered several times for the position of deputy mayor of Auckland but did not secure the role. She held the role of city councillor for 33 years until her retirement in 1946.<sup>19</sup>

Ellen Melville was a key figure in the twentieth-century feminist movement in New Zealand, representing a new breed for feminism. She paved the way for women in both civic affairs and the legal profession, encouraging women to be active in public life. As Sandra Coney states, "The Pioneer Women's and Ellen Melville Hall in central Auckland was erected in memory of her 33 year membership of the Auckland City Council and her service to women".<sup>20</sup>

association: n/a

event(s): n/a

period: n/a

## 2.5 Summary of important changes after completion

type of change: Sounds system installed

date(s): 1963

circumstances/ reasons for change: poor acoustics in the hall

effects of changes: Following the completion of the hall in 1962, there were initial problems including the acoustics of the hall and traffic noise outside.<sup>21</sup> To address these issues, a sound system was installed for audibility. This change was non-intrusive to the hall's design.

persons/organisations involved: Auckland City Council

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<sup>18</sup> Sandra Coney, 'Melville, Eliza Ellen', from the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Accessed February 7, 2014, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3m51/melville-eliza-ellen>

<sup>19</sup> Enid Annie Evans, 'Melville, Eliza Ellen', from the *Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Accessed February 7, 2014, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/1966/melville-eliza-ellen>

<sup>20</sup> Coney, 'Melville, Eliza Ellen'.

<sup>21</sup> Skinner, 'T. K. Donner', p.81.

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type of change: Air-conditioning system installed

date(s): 1974

circumstances/ reasons for change: Over-heating in the hall.

effects of changes: Heat loading and over-heating within the hall became an increasing problem due to the need to close the hall's windows in order to reduce noise rising from the street below. The addition of an air-conditioning system improved the functionality and comfort of the building for its users and at the same time did not impact upon the design of the hall. The cost of the installation was \$19,402.<sup>22</sup>

persons/organisations involved: Fisher and Paykel Engineering.

type of change: major redevelopment

date(s): 1996

circumstances/ reasons for change: The 1996 redevelopment was commissioned to resolve noise and acoustic problems associated with use of the hall as well as upgrade the facility as there had been little work done on it over the 35 years since its completion.

effects of changes: In 1996 Andrew Patterson Architects undertook a significant renovation of the hall. This included the complete redesign of the ground floor including the relocation of the main entrance to beneath the eastern stair landing. The main lobby was reduced in size, the James Bowie sculpture was relocated to the hall lobby, a lift was installed and replaced the men's toilet on the ground floor and changing rooms on the first floor, and the basement level was completely removed. Site works involved the enclosure of the open space under the elevated hall with glazed walls to accommodate a café (now Pumpkin Patch retail shop), while the committee rooms, women's rest room and crèche were all removed. An extension on the western High Street boundary designed to contain toilets and extra storage space was modelled off the east stairwell. The first floor was modified with additional spaces next to the stage, carpet laid and the original kitchen removed with the replacement kitchen and the Ellen Melville Meeting Room added in the west extension. Exterior works involved the insertion of new spandrel panels in blue glass into the façade, the recladding of the wall facing O'Connell Street in profiled aluminium, and the relocation of the Freyberg Place sign of dedication from the crèche entry to a wall opposite in the new public seating area of Freyberg Square.<sup>23</sup>

persons/ organisations involved: Andrew Patterson Architects

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<sup>22</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.7.

<sup>23</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.11.

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### 3. Description of building(s) etc.

#### 3.1 Site/building character

The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is located between High Street, Freyberg Place and O'Connell Street, and fronts onto Freyberg Square. Like many other civic works completed by the Auckland City Council in the post-World War II period, the hall is an example of post-war modern design and was designed by the Auckland City Council's chief architect, Tibor K. Donner. The design incorporates many modernist concepts such as "modern spatial planning ideas, a rational modular planning approach, the use of new materials and clear expression of the structural system".<sup>24</sup> The project was envisaged to create a women's centre in downtown Auckland and a memorial to the late Ellen Melville.

The hall is a two-storey building which faces Freyberg Square to the south. The building employs a rectilinear form with a projecting first floor supported by reinforced concrete pilotis (rectangular); this creates an illusion of the first floor floating above the ground. The pilotis extend the full length of the projecting first floor to support the spacious hall (3 structural bays wide, with each bay measuring approximately 3.5 metres), and provide what was originally an open court space below but is now enclosed by glazed walls. The hall projects out approximately 5 metres from the east stairwell. The structural system is clearly expressed with the tapering reinforced concrete pilotis that support the upper-level columns and in turn the beams from which the hall and butterfly roof are suspended.

More than just providing a structural system, the beams and columns provide a rhythm of bays in which glazing is installed. Cladding units were designed for the three facades of the first-floor hall. These units use aluminium framing with blue spandrel panels, glass panes and triple fanlight windows (each unit is 1.7 x 6 metres). This is an early example of aluminium framing in modern construction and design in the New Zealand.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the eastern stairwell containing the main entrance to the hall uses aluminium cladding units on both its south and east facades. The east façade has glazing between the reinforced concrete vertical structural members. These span the double height of the stairwell. Further north, a brick wall covered in profiled steel adjoins the neighbouring building. The south façade has a distinctive folded glass feature wall built with aluminium frames with the front door at its base, also framed in aluminium.

The west side of the building continues the use of bold vertical reinforced concrete columns. On the south façade, these extend the full two-storey height with cladding units between. The upper-level glazing employs aluminium framing with blue spandrels at its base, a glass pane and a single awning window at the top. The ground floor again uses aluminium framing but with a regulated grid of glass panes. A folded glass wall on its western façade has blue spandrels.

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<sup>24</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial hall', p.12.

<sup>25</sup> Errol Haarhoff, 'Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', *Guide to the Architecture of Central Auckland*, (Auckland: Balasoglou Books, 2003), p. 52.

Loadbearing reinforced concrete has been used as the primary structural system with a crushed quartz and marble chip render finish. Concrete and brick walls with a white plaster finish divide the interior spaces. The roof has been constructed out of structural steel used to form the butterfly roof shape over the hall, covered in asphalt. Flat concrete roof construction has been used in other areas.

The building has a floor area of 613m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>26</sup> The main entrance on the south façade provides direct access into the east stairwell with entry to a small kitchen on the ground level, and to the lobby area and main hall on the upper level. The James Bowie timber sculpture is currently located in the small lobby area. The hall's large volume features an elegant curved timber ceiling, reflective of the work of the influential architect, Alvar Aalto. A wooden stage at the northern end of the room has storage areas to either side. Striking large woven tukutuku panels line the back wall of the stage area, a gift from the Maori residents of Auckland.<sup>27</sup> A secondary stair access is provided to the west of the hall – this also provides a bridge to the western rooms of the building. The main internal stairs are constructed of folded steel plates and terrazzo treads and the secondary stairs are constructed of timber.

There are two meeting rooms at the west end of the building. They are located one above the other; the upper level is the Ellen Melville meeting room. Cupboard storage is provided in these rooms along the east wall. The interiors of the hall and meeting rooms use GIB wall lining with a white painted finish, carpeted floors and beige floor-to-ceiling curtains.

The enclosed retail space beneath the elevated hall is leased to a commercial tenant.

### 3.2 Current use

of whole building/site: Auckland Council community facility, with Pumpkin Patch children's clothing store in the enclosed area under the hall on street level.

### 3.3 Present (physical) condition

of whole building/site: The building would benefit from some general maintenance and repair.

of surrounding area: The building is linked to the adjacent Freyberg Square by piazza landscaping and is flanked by the prominent retail precincts of High Street and Chancery Lane. Significant changes have occurred in this area since the original construction of the Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall in 1961. In 1994, Freyberg Place was resurfaced and its carriageway narrowed to become more pedestrian friendly to complement the adjoining Freyberg Square.<sup>28</sup> The Metropolis Apartment Tower was built in 1999. It stands 40 storeys tall and is a landmark for downtown Auckland. The Chancery retail precinct was established in 2000, providing a premium shopping destination.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Ellen Melville Memorial Hall', *Home & Building*, 1 Mar 1965, p.89; Auckland Council, 'Auckland Council GIS Viewer', Accessed February 12, 2014, <http://maps.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/aucklandcouncilviewer/>

<sup>27</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.7.

<sup>28</sup> Architecture Archive, 'Andrew Patterson in Auckland', Accessed February 12 2014, <http://www.architecture-archive.auckland.ac.nz/docs/block-digital/2008-11BlockDigital-PattersonGuide.pdf>

### 3.4 Note(s) on context, indicating potential developments

In 2003 the Auckland City Council commissioned Matthews & Matthews Architects to prepare a heritage assessment of the Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall. This was to evaluate the building's significance and redevelopment options.

Note: Because the hall is scheduled as a Category B in the operative Central Section of the Auckland City District Plan as well as the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan, resource consent is required for any further additions, alterations or demolition.

The Auckland Council has identified Freyberg Square in the City Centre Masterplan for a full upgrade by 2032 – "Freyberg Square will be a safe and accessible place for people to move about and spend time in during the day and night".<sup>29</sup> The square's future redevelopment is intended to revitalise the area and improve the relationship of the square with surrounding buildings, including the Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall.

## 4. Evaluation

### *Intrinsic value*

#### 4.1 technical evaluation:

During the later 1950s and 1960s, architect Tibor Donner earned a reputation for innovation at the levels of structure and building materials. The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is an example of this. It is of technical significance for its reinforced concrete construction, the crushed quarts and marble chip render and the early use of aluminium window framing.

#### 4.2. social evaluation:

The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is very significant for its social value. It is a rare example of a New Zealand building built to commemorate a significant local woman as well as for recognising women's achievements more generally. Further, it is an example of a post-war memorial integrated with a community women's centre, made possible through a combined council and community funding collaboration. As Matthews & Matthews write, "the site has a long association with public buildings from the first Magistrates Court and Police Station in the nineteenth century. The construction of the hall demonstrates a growing consciousness of the relatively recent European history. It also commemorates the significance of one of the earliest practising women lawyers and local body politicians".<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Auckland Council, 'Overview of the masterplan', Accessed February 7, 2014, <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/en/planspoliciesprojects/plansstrategies/ccmp/Pages/plannedprojects.aspx#nogo>

<sup>30</sup> Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd, 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall', p.17.

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### 4.3. cultural and aesthetic evaluation:

The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is an important Auckland City landmark. The building is part of a series of key mid-century modern public works designed for the Auckland City Council by its own team of city architects. The hall's location and configuration in the prominent Freyberg Square also renders the building as a recognisable and well-known building within the central business district.

The incorporation of James Bowie's abstract sculpture and the Maori tukutuku panels also demonstrate the design ideas of the time.

The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall was designed by the Auckland City Council's chief architect, Tibor K. Donner. Donner was an important architect in New Zealand during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>31</sup> He had a particular interest in materials and technology, and liked to employ innovative and leading construction techniques in his buildings. This is evident in the design, structure and detailing of the hall. Donner was very interested in such developments and experienced them first-hand on his world fact-finding tour in 1956.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Comparative significance***

#### 4.4 canonical status (local, national, international)

The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is of national significance as a memorial to a significant New Zealand woman and indeed, to New Zealand's pioneer women more generally. It recognises women's achievements and contribution to public life in the Auckland region, and more specifically, the life and work of Ellen Melville as one of the first women in New Zealand to practise law and serve as a longstanding and exceptional city councillor. It is a rare building to do so (other places recognised for their association with important women included the Kate Sheppard House, Fendalton, Christchurch (1887-88) and the Margaret Home Sievwright Memorial, Gisborne (1906)).

The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is of further significance for its architectural merit and technological achievement. It is an important example of post-war modernist design. Key elements include the raising of the first floor on pilotis, the use of aluminium framed windows and glass spandrel panels, and the Aalto-esque ceiling. The hall's aluminium framed windows served as a precedent for their more extensive use by Tibor K. Donner in the large Civic Building completed in Aotea Square in 1966, known for its high technological significance.

The national significance of the hall has been recognised by its inclusion in *Long Live the Modern*, a book developed under the auspices of DOCOMOMO New Zealand. The book identifies 180 of New Zealand's best and most important extant modern buildings, sites and neighbourhoods.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, *40 Legends of New Zealand Design*, (Auckland: Random House, 2006), p. 47.

<sup>32</sup> Skinner, 'T. K. Donner', p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Antony Matthews, 'Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall', in Julia Gatley (ed.), *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008), p.117.

#### 4.5 historic and reference values:

The Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall is a rare New Zealand example of a facility designed for use by women in the 1960s. Today it is used by both sexes but remains a symbol of women's achievements and contribution within the Auckland region. Ellen Melville was a significant New Zealander and is remembered for numerous social and political roles, including being the first woman city councillor in New Zealand as well as a city councillor for 33 years.

### 5. Documentation

#### 5.1 archives/written records/correspondence etc. (state location/ address):

Auckland Council Archives, 44-46 Lorne Street, Auckland 1010.

Archives New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

#### 5.2 principal publications (in chronological order):

'Ellen Melville Memorial Hall', *Home & Building*. 1 Mar 1965. pp. 88-89.

Skinner, Robin. 'T. K. Donner: The Architect'. BArch thesis, The University of Auckland, 1994.

Skinner, Robin. 'Disarticulated High Rise: The Auckland City Administration Building'. *Habitus 2000: A Sense of Place, Perth, 5-9 September 2000* (conference), Perth, 2000.

Harrhoff, Errol. 'Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall'. *Guide to the Architecture of Central Auckland*. Auckland: Balasoglou Books, 2003.

Matthews & Matthews Architects Ltd. 'Heritage Assessment for Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Memorial Hall'. Heritage Assessment, Auckland, 2003.

Jenkins, Douglas Lloyd. *40 Legends of New Zealand Design*. Auckland: Random House, 2006.

Matthews, Antony. 'Ellen Melville Pioneer Women's Hall'. In Julia Gatley (ed.), *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008.

Auckland Council. 'Appendix 1: Schedule of Buildings, Heritage Properties, Places, Monuments and Objects of Special Value and those subject to Heritage Orders'. *Auckland City Council District Plan Operative 2005 – Central Area Section*. Accessed February 7, 2014.  
<http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/council/documents/central/pdfs/appendix01.pdf>

Auckland Council. 'Appendix 9: Schedule of Significant Historic Heritage Places'. *Proposed Auckland Council Unitary Plan – Schedule of Significant Historic Heritage Places – Part 1: Historic Heritage Places*. Accessed February 7, 2014.  
<http://unitaryplan.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Images/September%202013%20version/Appendicies%20PD>

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F/Appendix%209/Appendix%209%20-%20Schedule%20of%20significant%20historic%20heritage%20places%2020130913%20- %20FINAL.pdf

Auckland Council. 'Overview of the masterplan'. Accessed February 7, 2014. <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/en/planspoliciesprojects/plansstrategies/ccmp/Pages/plannedprojects.aspx#nogo>

Coney, Sandra. 'Melville, Eliza Ellen'. From the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Accessed February 7, 2014. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3m51/melville-eliza-ellen>

Evans, Enid Annie. 'Melville, Eliza Ellen'. From the *Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Accessed February 7, 2014. <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/1966/melville-eliza-ellen>

Auckland Council. 'Community Halls'. Accessed February 10, 2014. <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/parksfacilities/communitycentreshallsandhouses/communityhalls/Pages/central.aspx>

Metropolis Residences. 'The Building'. *Metropolis*. Accessed February 10, 2014. <http://www.metropolisresidences.com/thebuilding.html>

Public Art Around the World. 'Lord Freyberg Statue'. Accessed February 10, 2014. [http://www.publicartaroundtheworld.com/Lord\\_Freyberg\\_Statue.html](http://www.publicartaroundtheworld.com/Lord_Freyberg_Statue.html)

Architecture Archive. 'Andrew Patterson in Auckland'. Accessed February 12, 2014. <http://www.architecture-archive.auckland.ac.nz/docs/block-digital/2007-11BlockDigital-PattersonGuide.pdf>

Auckland Council. 'Auckland Council GIS Viewer'. Accessed February 12, 2014. <http://maps.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/aucklandcouncilviewer/>

### **5.3 visual material (state location/ address)**

original visual records/drawings/photographs/others:

Auckland Council Archives, 44-46 Lorne Street, Auckland, 1010.

Archives New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

recent photographs and survey drawings:

Auckland Libraries. 'Pioneer Women's and Ellen Melville Memorial Hall'. *Heritage et AL*. Accessed February 10, 2014. <http://heritageetal.blogspot.co.nz/2013/02/pioneer-womens-and-ellen-melville.html>

film/video/other sources: n/a

### **5.4 list documents included in supplementary dossier**

n/a

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## 6. Fiche report

name of reporter: Lauren Speer c/- Dr Julia Gatley

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date of report: February 2014

### examination by DOCOMOMO national/regional section

approval by wp co-ordinator/registers correspondent (name): Dr Ann McEwan

sign and date:



22 November 2014

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### examination by DOCOMOMO ISC/R

name of ISC member in charge of the evaluation:

comment(s):

sign and date:

ISC/R approval:

date:

wp/ref. no.:

NAI ref. no.:

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