

house histories



Unlock the key to the past.

House Histories are illustrated documents prepared for owners who are looking for an explanation of how their building has developed and evolved over the years. For anyone who has a true love of older properties, you will know that part of that love stems from the knowledge that your house has 'lived' a whole lot longer than you have – other people have made meals in this kitchen, dreamed of what colour the bedroom should be and when no one was looking, slid down the bannisters. In our recent restoration we peeled back multiple layers of wallpaper to find a message scribbled on the lathe and plaster saying '*First wallpapered in 1915*' and underneath that it said '*Wallpapered again in 1918*' in a different script. Such a simple message, yet for someone finding it almost 100 years later, it's pretty exciting!

Every home has a story.

Your house can tell you so much more than you could imagine – the age, architect and builder may be interesting, but more so is the reason it was built, who for, why here, why this style of property with this design and this many rooms? It can indicate the social status of the first owner and what was going on in the locality, and often nationally, at the time it was built. Most houses of age have been bought, sold, leased and subject to rates and taxes over the years – these all provide details of the building and occupants. By digging deep into the archives, we can uncover the history of your home, breathe life into the forgotten inhabitants, and reveal some fascinating stories.



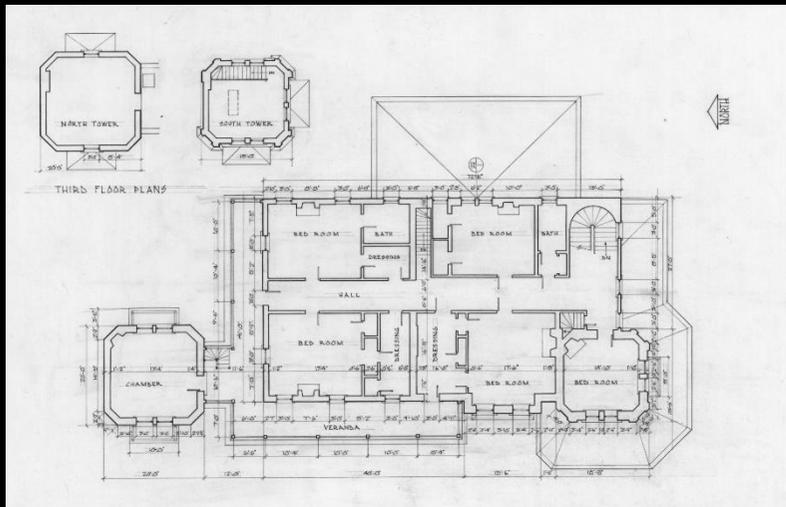
Where do we start?

The process involves a personal visit to your property followed by comprehensive local and national documentary research. Your House History will provide a chronological history of the property including information on construction, approximate date, any evident architectural changes over time, a history of the locality and previous inhabitants. It will be illustrated with copies of available archive documents such as titles, maps, plans, photographs, newspaper cuttings and any other records.

The results can make a fascinating read and can be presented either as a short report-style document or a small-scale coffee table-type book.

Stages in research

- Identify the style and architectural era of the house, including any notable features, local vernacular and evidence of architectural changes throughout the years.
- Obtain historic titles. These may be numerous depending on how many times the property has changed hands. As well as identifying owners, these can show any changes in land area, boundaries etc. which have occurred over the years. If possible the search will go back as far as the original deeds (the deeds system was the main way property ownership was recorded in New Zealand before the land titles system).
- Identify whether any physical changes have been made which, depending on when they were carried out, may have required building or planning consent. If so, records of such may be available from the local authority, along with architectural plans.
- Identify occupants, as the house may not always have been occupied by the owners. There are a number of methods of establishing residents, including electoral registers and census returns.
- Search for other forms of archive material such as historic ordinance survey or Road Board maps, plans, photographs, newspaper articles, births/death/marriages. If there is particular interest in a certain resident then a genealogy service may provide additional information.



Presentation

Your House History will be provided to you in two ways - in digital form and as a printed version. The printed version can either be as a functional short report-style document or as a small-scale coffee table-type book – these can be given an authentic look by being hand bound.

Use your House History as you choose - they are a talking point as a coffee table book; can be useful when selling your home; or they make a fantastic gift idea for a history-loving friend.

House Histories start at \$500, depending on what level of information you wish to have included and how you would like it presented. Feel free to contact us for a quote.