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## **ART DECO TRUST INFORMATION SHEET 8**

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# **THE NON-STATUTORY APPROACH**

Heritage preservation can be achieved in two ways, or through a combination of the two.

- The Statutory Approach, imposing regulations through local authority District Schemes,
- The Non-Statutory Approach, making people want to preserve their heritage, without forcing them to do so.

In Napier, the Non-Statutory Approach has been used, with some encouragements by regulation, and it seems to have worked.

### **WHY DID WE USE IT?**

Because we knew that there was little chance of persuading the local authority to impose regulations, for these reasons:

- In the 1980s, the City Council saw progress as being best achieved through redevelopment of the Inner City, and because they feared that compensation might be claimed for loss of developmental value.
- The public did not consider Napier's buildings historic because they were only 60 years old, they did not see them as having any architectural value, and they did not think them remarkable enough to attract tourists. These are common attitudes when dealing with preservation of the recent past, because peoples' taste and prejudices influence their attitudes to heritage.
- There was no legal framework in New Zealand that made it easy to impose regulations.
- Because in general, New Zealand's Heritage protection legislation is not greatly effective.
- Because statutory controls have been out of favour in recent years.

### **HOW DID WE APPLY IT?**

- We recognised Napier's tourist potential, which was considerable, and decided that Napier could become a world-class tourist attraction. And we could see that Art Deco could give Napier a unique marketing advantage.
- We set ourselves up as a Napier promotional body, with a different direction to the one which already existed.
- We took a pragmatic approach. For instance, we recognised that the buildings had to earn their living as the city's commercial heart, and that a purist approach would fail.

- We provided experiences for the tourists, to enhance their visit - freedom walks, guided walks the Art Deco Weekend.
- We produced and sold merchandise, as much to promote Napier as to make money.
- We never stopped feeding the media with news items.
- We bombarded the City Council with letters, submissions, special guided walks, pre-election questions etc.
- We improved the product by encouraging people to repaint their buildings, giving annual Art Deco Awards, writing letters of praise etc.
- We encouraged owners of businesses in Art Deco buildings, especially shops, bars and restaurants, to think Art Deco.
- We obtained a Ministry of Tourism grant for the city of \$127,000 to enhance the historic area.
- We promoted Napier by publishing brochures, writing articles, assisting journalists, writing to publishers of travel guides praising or correcting them, presenting all New Zealand tourism offices overseas with a copy of "Art Deco Napier", establishing contact with Art Deco societies in other countries and so on.
- We didn't do it much, but we campaigned to save buildings from demolition.
- But above all, we realised that there was no way that we could "protect" the buildings - all we could do was to make people so proud of them that they would want to preserve them.

## **WHAT IS THE RESULT?**

- The city looks immaculate.
- Napier is written about all over the world.
- The tourists are visible all over town.
- The City Council is now committed to Art Deco and has even re-landscaped the main street with an Art Deco theme.
- There is a feeling of optimism and pride in Napier, that is the result of people knowing that other people think that their city is special.
- Some major buildings that a few years ago were considered doomed, have been restored and have become showplaces.
- The Art Deco Trust has persuaded the City to support it financially and now has a staff of 7, its own premises and a successful shop.