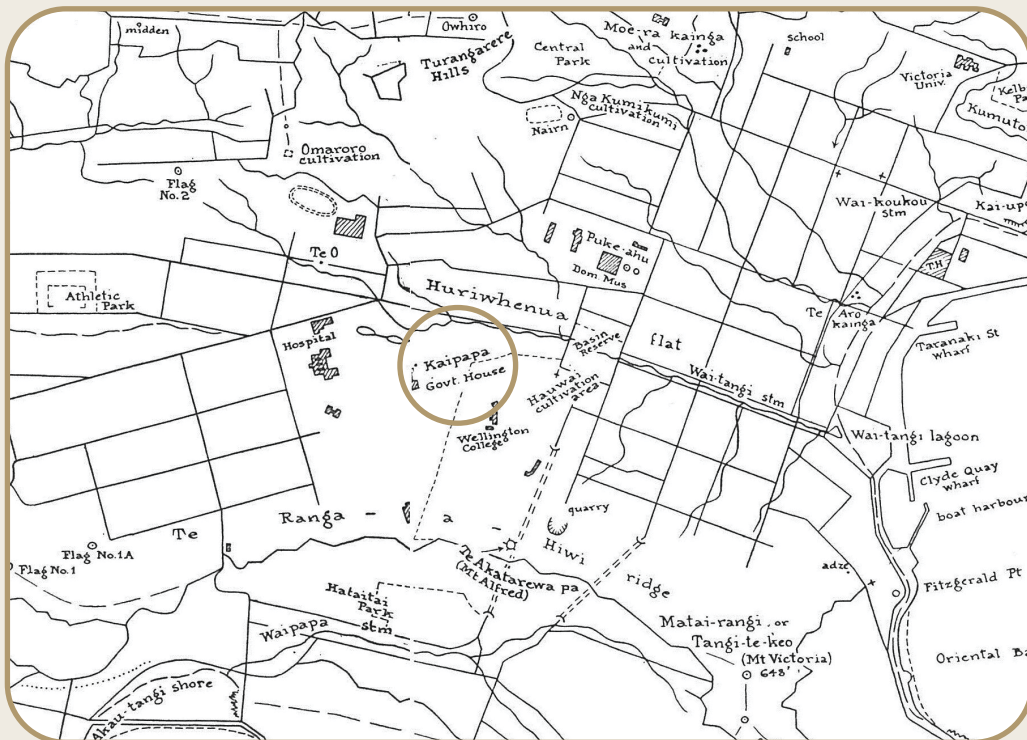




Timeline of the use of Kaipapa/Government House site



Map credit: George Leslie Adkin, *The Great Harbour of Tara*, Whitcombe & Tombs, (1959), pp. 92-104.

*The pre 1839 landscape

The land is largely covered in forest and under the rangatiratanga (authority) of resident Māori. From the edge of today's Basin Reserve up to the entrance of Wellington College below Te Ranga a Hiwi (Mount Victoria ridge) is the Hauwai cultivation area. The flat area between Pukeahu and Wellington Harbour is a large wetland known as the Huriwhenua Flat. This wetland is used as a mahinga kai (food gathering place). The Waitangi Stream starts at springs on the site of Wellington Hospital and flows along the edge of Riddiford Street and Adelaide Road. It provides tuna (eels), kōkopu and other indigenous freshwater fish, water birds, and other resources such as harakeke (flax).

*At the bottom of the Government House site two ponds feed into the Waitangi Stream.
The remnants can still be seen today.

1839-1872

Arrival of European colonists

- 1839
The New Zealand Company instructs William Mein Smith to create a public land belt, and claims to purchase Māori land - later ruled invalid by the Waitangi Tribunal.
- 1840
625 hectares of Public Reserve Land, including the Government House site, is designated for public enjoyment.
- 1841
The Crown takes ownership of the Town Belt, proclaiming it a Public Reserve and evicting all occupants, including Māori.
- 1855
Major earthquake uplifts land in Wellington, including the Basin Reserve area.
- 1861
Town Belt granted to the Provincial Superintendent of Wellington under the Public Reserves Act 1854.
- 1865
Wellington becomes the capital of New Zealand.
- 1872
One-third of the Town Belt is allocated for public use; Mt View Asylum construction begins.

1873-1910

Mt View Lunatic Asylum

- 1873
The Mount View Asylum opens on 22 May 1873.
- 1908
With the construction of Government House in 1908-1910, the Asylum is largely demolished.

1908

Government House construction begins

- 1908
Government House is built, designed by architect John Campbell and assisted by Claude Paton.
- 1911
A 'Champs-Élysées-style' approach to Government House is planned, relocating the Queen Victoria monument, redesigning gardens, adding reflecting pools, and widening access near the Basin Reserve for trams.
- 1935
Designs for the landscaping of the garden prepared by Trevor Buxton of Christchurch firm A.W. Buxton Ltd.
- 1944
Governor-General Lord Galway gifts land to Newtown Kindergarten.
- 1980
The Vice Regal Play Area is developed on former Government House land returned to the Town Belt.
- 1990
In 1996, a five-year plan begins to extensively redevelop and re-landscape the garden, enhancing its historical framework.
- 2008
A major restoration project, led by Athfield Architects and Isthmus, renovates, re-roofs, and strengthens the house, with the Governor-General residing in Vogel House during the work.
- 2012
The Visitor Centre opens for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, repurposing former vice-regal garages and the asylum laundry.

1839-1872

Arrival of European colonists

1839 The New Zealand Company instructs its surveyor, William Mein Smith, that 'the town inland should be separated by a broad belt of land ... to be public property on condition that no buildings be ever erected on it'. They 'purchase' the harbour and surrounding hills from the Māori of Pito-one and Nga-u-ranga. This is subsequently found by the Waitangi Tribunal to be an invalid purchase.

1840 625 hectares of Public Reserve Land is marked on a plan of Wellington as land for the enjoyment of the public. This includes the Government House site.

1841 The Crown assumes ownership of the Town Belt. Governor Hobson promises Wellington rangatira their cultivations won't be disturbed. However, he subsequently proclaims the Town Belt a Public Reserve and requires everyone to vacate, including Māori with rangatiratanga (authority) over the land. It is not to be cleared, fenced, cultivated or built on.

1855 Major earthquake uplifts land in Wellington, including the Basin Reserve area.

1861 Town Belt granted to the Provincial Superintendent of Wellington under the Public Reserves Act 1854.

1865 Wellington becomes the capital of New Zealand.

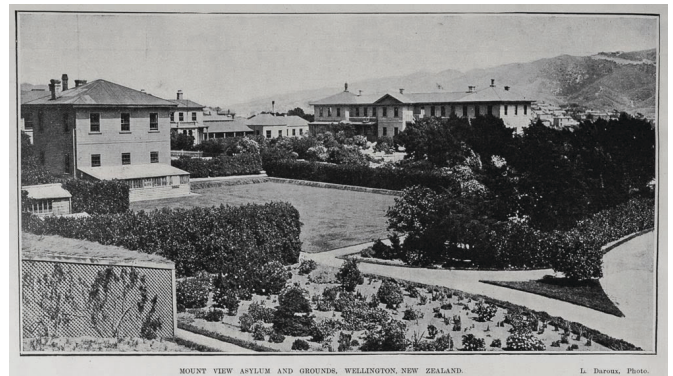
1872 One third of Town Belt land is appropriated for a range of public purposes, including hospitals, roads and schools under the Wellington City Reserves Act 1872.

Site selected for the Mt View Asylum and construction begins.

1873-1910

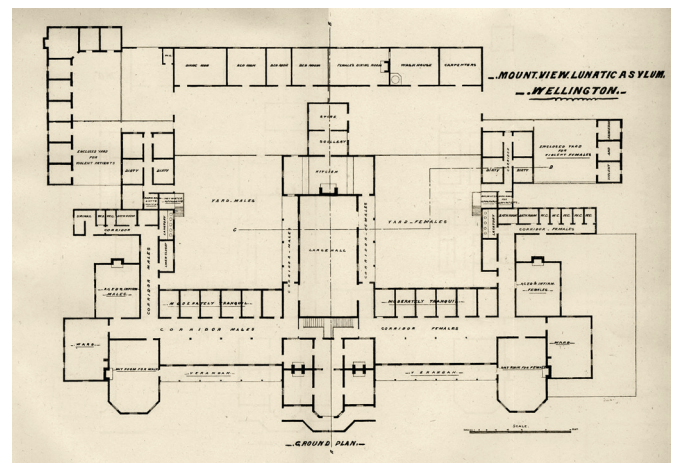
Mt View Lunatic Asylum

The Mount View Asylum opens on 22 May 1873 with Dr Charles France as Medical Officer. The architect is Christian Julius Toxward, who later designs Wellington Public Hospital in Newtown.



At its peak, Mount View houses over 250 patients, plus numerous staff. The main asylum consists of a series of large wooden buildings, with segregated male and female wings. The bricks for walls are made using prison labour. The Asylum grounds sprawl over the southern section of Mount Victoria from the Basin Reserve to the hospital. Vigorous work, including growing food, is considered an important aspect of the treatment and rehabilitation of patients. The work is extremely hard on such a windy site with poor quality soil, and early plans for the asylum to be self-sufficient in producing food are abandoned.

With the construction of Government House in 1908-1910, the Asylum is largely demolished.



1908

Government House construction begins



1908-10 Government House is built. The architect is John Campbell, who also designed Parliament Buildings, assisted by Claude Paton. It is modelled on an English domestic-style residence with classical and Tudor inspired features. The first vice-regal resident is Governor Lord Islington (1910-12). The main entrance is via Drummond Street.

1911 As part of a plan to create a 'Champs-Élysées-style' approach to the Government House grounds, the Queen Victoria monument is moved from Post Office Square to Cambridge Terrace, and hedges and gardens are removed from the median strip between Kent and Cambridge Terrace to make way for reflecting pools and statues. A strip sixty feet wide (18.2m) is claimed from the Basin Reserve grounds to create a statelier approach to the entrance of Government House. This has the added benefit of making it easier for trams to get around the Basin.

Until 1914, sentries are posted at the main gate. The Changing of the Guard is carried out with all the ceremony associated with Buckingham Palace.

1935 Designs for the landscaping of the garden are prepared by Trevor Buxton of Christchurch firm A.W. Buxton Ltd.

1944 Governor-General Lord Galway gifts land to Newtown Kindergarten. The land was originally a paddock and vegetable garden.

1980 The Vice Regal Play Area is developed on former Government House land returned to the Town Belt.

Government House continued...

1990s In 1996, a five-year extensive redevelopment plan commences to develop the garden to its full potential, building upon the existing historical framework. The grounds are extensively redeveloped and re-landscaped.

2008-2010 Major restoration project is completed: the house is re-roofed, seismically strengthened and the interior and exterior extensively renovated. The project is led by Athfield Architects, with Isthmus as landscape architects. The Governor-General, Sir Anand Satyanand, lives in Vogel House, Lower Hutt during this time.

2012 The Visitor Centre opens as a gift to the Queen on her Diamond Jubilee. The classroom and main exhibition room were once garages for vice-regal cars and carriages.

The Visitor Centre area was the laundry for the asylum.