

The Old High Court – Restoration



In 1993, the Wellington High Court moved out of the Stout Street building. Deemed a Category 1 historic building, its future in the early 1990s hung in the balance. Left empty for 14 years, the building's condition deteriorated.

When a permanent home for the new Supreme Court was planned on the Lambton Quay end of the block, the Old High Court was restored too. Both buildings form part of the Supreme Court complex.

To help the building absorb the swaying and shaking of earthquakes, 130 base isolators were installed in between the old masonry structure and its old foundations.



Removing the old foundations



Base isolator

While the structural work was completed, care was taken to protect the kauri and rimu timber staircase and wall panelling.



Public foyer – during the restoration and after



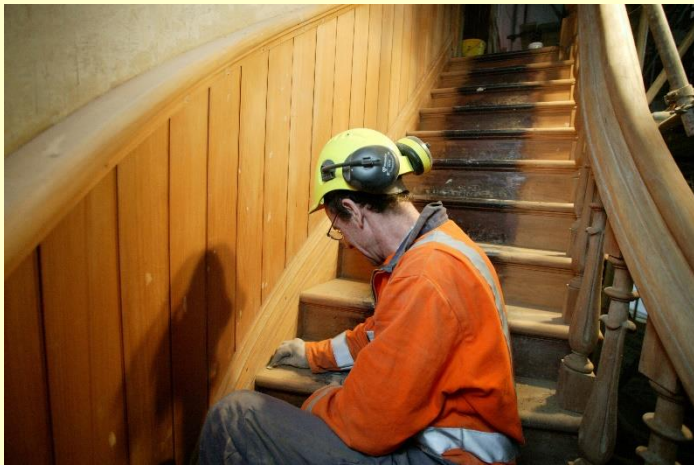


Courtroom No. 1. during the restoration



Courtroom No. 1 after

As a Category 1 historic building, the Old High Court had to be restored as close as possible to its original design, yet remain fit for modern use. The staircases and wall panelling are kauri and rimu. When the building was built, however, the timber was coated with a dark stain to resemble English timber. During the restoration, the wood was stained again to acknowledge this.



Preparing the timber in the foyer to be stained again



The finished result

The Old High Court reopened in 2010. The office space in the building is now used for staff working for the Office of the Chief Justice. They are responsible for judicial development across all courts, supporting the senior judiciary and for the Courts of New Zealand website. The courtroom is used as a ceremonial courtroom for Wellington.



There is no public access to the building, however guided tours are available. Email tours@justice.govt.nz to find out when the next guided tour is planned.



Before the restoration



After the restoration