

Council defends itself over claim that monuments are neglected

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By ANTONY PALTRIDGE

THE New Plymouth District Council has rejected criticism that it has neglected the monuments in its care.

In The Daily News yesterday, columnist David Bruce criticised the care of many of the monuments around the city, such as the weeds growing around the old Boer War Fountain on the top of Marsland Hill, and the missing mast of the Australind, below Paritutu Rock.

"There should be a memorial on Marsland Hill for the dead memorials it houses," he said.

But NPDC parks director Grant Porteous said the council did care for the monuments under its care.

"There has been a lot of effort and expenditure over a whole range of heritage items throughout the district in recent times and the council has got an ongoing commitment to the maintenance of them."

Mr Porteous said the council was progressively working through the upgrade of many monuments and other historic buildings and sites.

He pointed to the \$20,908 spent on refurbishing Marsland Hills'



MEMORIAL LANDMARKS: From left, the Honeyfield fountain, Dawson St and, on Marsland Hill, Kibby Carillon, the Maori War Monument and, above, the Bernard Aris seat.

Photos: MARK DWYER

Kibby Carillon in 1998-99, the more than \$16,000 spent on the Pukekura Park gates in 1998-99, the \$22,000 on the city's Cenotaph in 1997 and \$20,000 on the Inglewood Rotunda in 1993.

As well, a lot of money had also been spent on the Pukekura Park water wheel, the Gables in Brooklands Park and the cemeteries the council maintained.

Mr Porteous said the state of the Boer War Fountain, which spent

20 years in the former Devon Mall, was meant to have been planted by now and would be planted shortly.

However, because of its isolation and the threat of vandalism, it was decided that it was impractical to reactivate it as a fountain.

The soldier that was positioned on the top of the Maori War Memorial, on Marsland Hill, was vandalised about 10 years ago and its remains were in the Taranaki Museum.

Mr Porteous said the Australind mast was moved to be with the Pioneer Obelisk at the bottom of Pioneer Rd and the failure to move the plaque was an oversight.

The Honeyfield fountain, at the end of Dawson St, had \$6400 spent on it in 1995 but it was impractical and a health risk to reactivate it as a drinking fountain.

The other issues Mr Bruce had raised would be investigated, he said.