

MEDIA RELEASE
FEBRUARY 2026

GLORAT THE CLARKE HOMESTEAD

The Clarke Homestead, otherwise known as Glorat, sits overlooking Whangārei City here on Heritage Park, at Kiwi North. It has survived the lives, the losses and the minimal alterations of three successive generations of the same family. Time stands still within it, set on its original 19th century farm as an icon of a period of new and intrepid settlement, having seen two world wars, 20th century industrialisation and now the modernisation of the 21st century. Largely original, Glorat tells tales of its family, the farm, and even a period where its walls contained a doctor's surgery. As a Grade 2 Heritage New Zealand listed building, with the love and care of the community and the team at Kiwi North, who knows what else Glorat will witness in the future.

With thanks to our funders, Kiwi North is delighted to share an update on Glorat. After closing to the public in 2020, the homestead underwent several phases of work towards optimal conservation of both the exterior and interior. As a landmark example of early Whangārei, the structure was at risk of deterioration that would not be reversible. With a long list of works deemed urgent, the conservation project began from the top to the bottom. By June 2021 the roofing had been redone, and, within the homestead, a dedicated team had cleaned, photographed and catalogued the artefacts for storage. Six months later, Kerr Construction had completed the first phase- the roof had been replaced, piles and footings maintained and, up top, the chimneys had been stabilised. Phase one finished with a fresh lick of paint to the exterior.

Phases two and three were led by project manager Gael Ramsay, who set to tackle the interior elements of the project. With complex requirements to meet heritage standards, every volunteer and contractor overcame many challenges and delays. The walls were rescrimmed and rewallpapered to reflect the original style where one pattern could never be enough. The timber floors were shellacked and fire systems updated. Then began the mammoth task of deciding which objects returned to the homestead to tell the stories of the Clarke Family. Each room was dressed in the style of the time, but instead of showing a mismatch of multiple generations at once, the rooms are now what would have been "liveable". Gael's staging evokes the sense that the homeowner could walk in the door and make a cup of tea. In November 2025 a project celebration was held to acknowledge years of work towards the outcome - conserving Glorat.



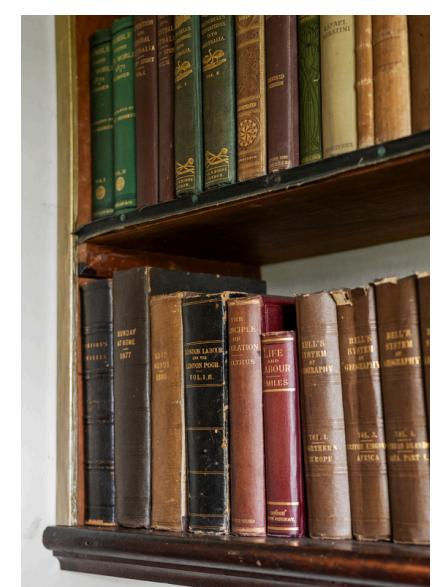
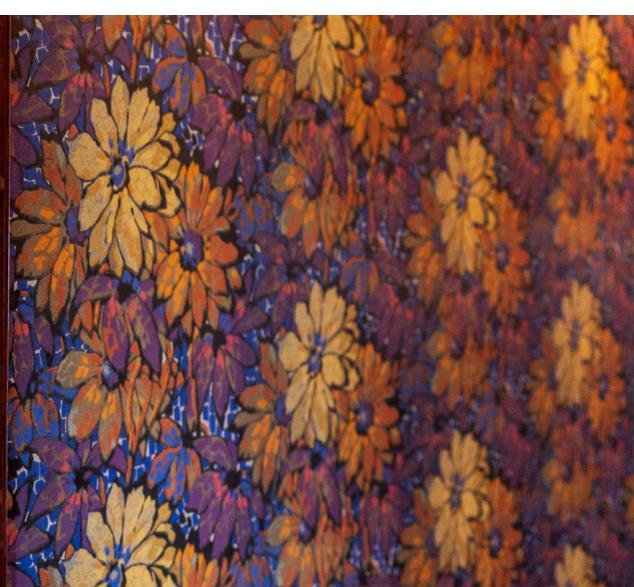
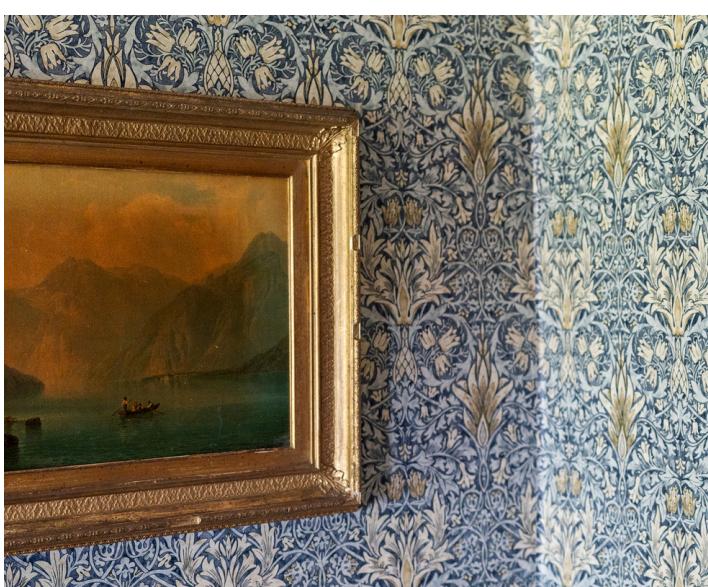
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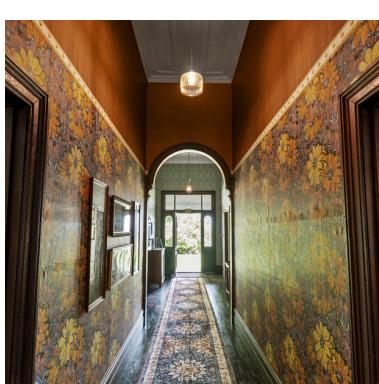
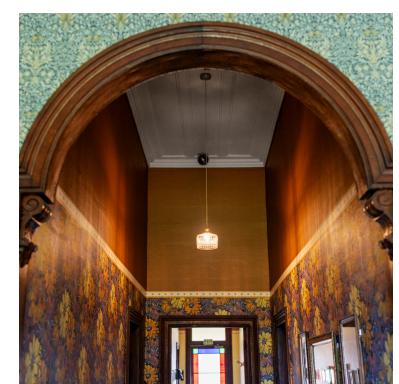
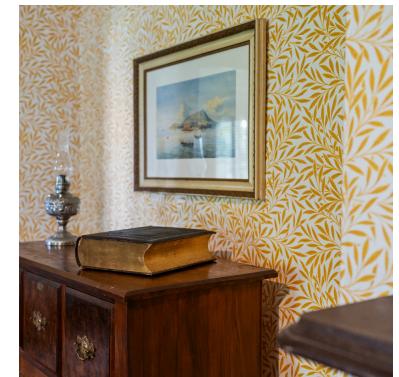
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Looking forward, Kiwi North's Director, Ruth Green-Cole, touches on the deep sense of responsibility as a non-profit organisation with intent to honour what has been achieved by delivering more - "heritage work never truly ends. It's a continuous journey of preservation and education, ensuring that future generations can connect with their past and understand the rich tapestry of our shared history." Ruth emphasises the importance of community engagement and the role it plays in sustaining such heritage projects. "We aim to create a vibrant space where history is not just observed, but experienced and appreciated."

The next steps will be to secure resourcing to manage this space, keep up with cyclical maintenance, develop interpretations and tours and care for Glorat to the best standard possible. These initiatives are designed to bring Glorat's stories to life, engaging both young and old in meaningful ways. Additionally, Ruth envisions collaborative events with local schools and groups to foster a deeper appreciation for the heritage of the site. Glorat continues to be a beacon of history and a testament to the enduring spirit of those who call Whangārei home.





Glorat November 2025



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Images:

1	Project Celebration Event, Saturday 22 November, 2025
2	Gael Ramsay, Project Lead presented with a Lifetime Membership for exceptional services to Kiwi North
3	Lavendil Quartet playing on the verandah of Glorat
4	Garden sponsorship gratefully received from Mitre10 Whangārei
5	Bill Edwards, Northland Area Manager of Heritage New Zealand speaking at the event.
6	Special guests, several Clarke family descendants, attending the project celebration as the first group to see the interior changes.



Keep in touch:

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