

***THE NEW ZEALAND  
ORGAN PRESERVATION TRUST  
INCORPORATED (NZOPT)***

**GUIDELINES**

**for the**

**ASSESSMENT**

**of**

**PIPE ORGANS**

# THE NEW ZEALAND ORGAN PRESERVATION TRUST

## Guidelines For The Assessment Of Pipe Organs

The value of the instrument is to be assessed by a panel of not less than three persons to be appointed by the NZOPT council. The panel may assign it one of these categories:

- I (Must preserve at all costs)
- II (Very significant. Should be preserved)
- III (Significant. Should be preserved)
- IV (Desirable to retain and maintain).

Many (perhaps most) instruments will not be assigned to any of these categories (just as most buildings are not classified by the Historic Places Trust).

The criteria to be used for assessment are:

- a. the extent to which the instrument remains in its original state
- b. age
- c. rarity
- d. professional standing of the builder
- e. size
- f. aesthetic value
- g. other criteria in the Historic Places Act 1993 (S23).

For instruments more than 50 years old, the panel must *report* on each of the first three criteria and must *consider* the remaining criteria. Usual standards for Categories I to IV (other things being equal) for the first criterion are detailed immediately below. Clarifying notes for other criteria are at the end of these Guidelines.

For instruments less than 50 years old, broadly the same process is to be used. However, criteria b, and g (age, Historic Places Act) will be less relevant for newer instruments. Criterion a (extent in original state) will carry less weight than with historic instruments because newer instruments generally show fewer changes.

### Category I

1. Completely unaltered pipe work and tonal scheme (with the possible exception of tuning slides).
2. The original playing action and console (with the possible exception of light fittings & switches).
3. The original chests and winding system (with the possible exception of re-leathering or restoration in accord with historic conservation principles).
4. The pipework presents its original finish.
5. The case and its decorations are original.
6. The original pitch remains (and tuning temperament).

To be in this grade the organ must have a majority of these factors and be a rare or previously historically restored example of the builder.

## **Category II**

1. Substantially unaltered pipe work and tonal scheme allowing for subsequent additions which are completely in harmony with the original scheme, especially if the added ranks were prepared for by the original builder (with the possible exception of tuning slides).
2. A large proportion of the original playing action and console remain.
3. The original chests and winding system remain substantially unaltered.
4. The pipework may have lost its original surface finishes such as stencilling..
5. The case and its decorations may be altered but are largely original.
6. The original pitch remains or if the pitch has been altered, it has been done in such a way that the original pitch can be restored relatively easily (and tuning temperament).

To be in this grade the organ must have a majority of these factors and be a rare or previously historically restored example of the builder.

## **Category III**

1. Pipe work and tonal scheme have been altered/added too but the additions are in harmony with the original scheme.
2. The original playing action may have been significantly altered or replaced. This may include replacement of the console.
3. The original chests and winding system are extant or in situ but may have been altered or added too.
4. The pipework may not present its original finish.
5. The case and its decorations may be altered (corbelling removed) but are still recognisable as belonging to the builder.
6. The original pitch and temperament may have been altered.

To be in this grade the organ will be recognisable as belonging to a builder and is still significant in relation to its builder or technological features.

## **Category IV**

Over its lifetime it may have had several rebuilds, but is still recognisable as an example of its builder or retains links to that style.

Criterion	Clarifying note
Age	<p>Organs are normally at least 50 years old before NZOPT would consider them for an Historic Organ Certificate. This is consistent with US (OHS) practice. We can more confidently label organs built before 1930 as historic (as suggested by our <i>Guidelines for Conservation &amp; Restoration</i>). This date is consistent with the cut-off date for historic organs chosen by the Royal Canadian College of Organists, and similar to the 1920 date suggested by the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS).</p> <p>These guidelines can be used to assess significance of non-historic instruments where this may help with their preservation. But caution is necessary because some decades are often required to form a clear view of long-term significance. Hence assessments made of newer instruments are at greater risk of needing revision as time passes.</p>
Rarity	<p>Consider <i>local</i>, <i>national</i> and <i>international</i> rarity. In particular, any instrument of clear international significance should be clearly identified as such.</p>
Professional standing of the builder	<p>Evidence for this includes their reputation for quality at the time of building and since, and the number and size of instruments they were commissioned to build.</p>
Size	<p>One reason for considering size is so that larger instruments are not unjustly disadvantaged simply because changes to their original condition are more likely.</p> <p>Although they may have many stop knobs, extension organs with only a few ranks or pipes will seldom merit high significance given their small size (in terms of pipe numbers) and the compromises in their tonal construction that reduce aesthetic value.</p>
Aesthetic value	<p>This includes visual as well as musical value.</p> <p>Strong regret in hindsight about organbuilding decisions in recent decades warns us sharply how judgements of aesthetic value may be affected by passing fashions; hence we should judge aesthetic value with appropriate humility..</p> <p>Assessors should try to take into account the extent to which the acoustic environment may be detracting from or flattering the sound of the instrument.</p>
Other criteria in the Historic Places Act	<p>The most relevant additional criteria from this Act are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• architectural, cultural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, technological significance or value</li> <li>• the association with events, persons, or ideas of importance in New Zealand history</li> <li>• the technical accomplishment or value, or design.</li> </ul> <p>In particular, 'technical accomplishment' will often be relevant if the craftsmanship is notably good or poor.</p>