

29 November 2006

Re: NRC-153592-Bus Shelters

This submission is from the Wellington Architectural Centre, a group which represents both professional and non-professionals interested in architecture and design, and in the promotion of good design in Wellington.

1) Opposition for the proposal

The Architectural Centre is concerned about the seemingly wholesale replacement of bus shelters with adshels. In our opinion, this has frequently been ill considered in the past and the adshels need changes to their design to be successful in Wellington. Consequently we oppose the resource consent application and make the following comments.

2) Key Issues

a) the need to replace bus shelters

Our survey of the bus shelter listed suggests that only a small number of the bus shelters listed for replacement are in a condition that warrants replacement. Many appear to be in good condition and several only need minor maintenance. Very few show substantial structural damage or material decay. This is a serious issue for us as:

- (i) the proposed replacement adshel shelter would, in most cases, provide less shelter to bus patrons than the existing shelter, and
- (ii) the replacement of adequate shelters for adshels is a waste of resources and conflicts with council's stated aims to promote environmentally sustainable practices.

We understand the financial benefit for the council to support a bus shelter system which is organised and paid for by the makers of adshels but we consider that the current design and process of replacement of bus shelters is flawed. This needs reconsideration and refinement for the council to get the best deal in this arrangement. We believe the council needs to demand better quality and specific design for Wellington citizens.

b) the design of adshels

From a functional perspective the design of adshels are inadequate as bus shelters. The designs appear to have been either designed for a very different climate than that of Wellington or designed by people who have no or very little use of buses in Wellington wind and rain. The design needs to be improved for Wellington conditions to address the following:

- (i) the roof of the shelter is too shallow to protect from non-vertical rain. The shelter needs to be a greater depth to resolve this.
- (ii) the shelter needs to be placed on the footpath so that it provides shelter from the prevailing wind direction rather than being always open to the bad weather coming from the road direction. This will require both redesign for specific sites and reorientation of the shelters to provide meaningful protection from the weather.
- (iii) the gaps between the ground and the walls allow cold wind and rain into the "sheltered" area.
- (iv) the manifestation pattern (placed on the glass to prevent people inadvertently walking into a transparent material), is placed such that it obscures the vision of seated occupants, making it difficult to see oncoming buses.



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- (v) timetables need to be placed so that they can be read in the dark at night. Currently there are cases where timetables are placed so light from the adshel and/or light from a nearby street light is behind the timetable, casting the timetable in shadow, making it impossible to read it at night. Timetables and adshels need to be positioned such that light falls on the surface of the timetable rather than behind it.

These design issues are important because it is often in bad weather that buses tend to be late (because of increased traffic, low visibility etc.) and when bus shelters must provide adequate shelter for bus users for unscheduled longer periods of time. We suggest that bad experiences catching buses in inclement weather will discourage greater bus use, and the provision by the council of adequate shelter is important to address this.

We would recommend that the council research other models (for example, the work of Frank Pick in the 1930s and the busstop designs used for London Transport), in producing an integrated solution for timetable, signage, lighting and branding.

c) heritage

Only two bus shelters (in Oriental Bay) are listed in the heritage schedule of the District Plan. This is of concern if there is a strategy to eventually replace all existing shelters with adshel-type shelters. We strongly recommend that the council make a detailed survey of existing bus shelters to ensure that shelters with potential heritage value are evaluated for their possible inclusion in the Heritage Schedule of the District Plan. Often it is with such large scale decisions that items of significant heritage value are destroyed because appropriate advice is not sought in time.

d) the need to encourage bus travel through the provision of adequate shelter

Encouraging the use of public transport (in this instance the use of buses), has become increasingly important to the council's key objectives regarding the health of its citizens, minimising the effects of climate change and the decline of global oil supplies. We consider that effective bus shelters are an important aspect of a comprehensive strategy to encourage greater use of public transport buses.

5) Conclusion

We question the wholesale replacing of adequately functioning bus shelters with inadequately designed and unthoughtfully positioned adshels. We also question whether heritage issues are given appropriate consideration, and whether functioning bus shelters are being prematurely replaced. We strongly suggest that if new bus shelters are to be erected that they be designed for Wellington weather, and be positioned to be effective in the locality in which they are situated. We acknowledge the important role the council has in providing adequate shelter to bus patrons. We demand that this be a meaningful contribution.

Yours sincerely

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The Architectural Centre