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18 May 2017

Annual Plan 2017/18
Freepost WCC
Wellington City Council
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Re: WCC Building a better city: Annual Plan 2017/18

This submission is from the Architectural Centre, an incorporated society dating from 1946, which represents both professionals and non-professionals interested in the promotion of good design.

We have organised our submission under the headings of the consultation document, and have the following comments to make regarding the proposed WCC Annual Plan 2017/18:

(A) Removal of Fees

1. We support the goal for Wellington to be **smokefree by 2025**. We support a smokefree Wellington because we believe this will make our urban spaces more welcoming to more people, as well as safer (smoking kills).

(B) Affordable Housing

2. We strongly support the WCC's commitment to **increasing council housing**. We are proud of Wellington's heritage of council housing provision, and believe that this is an important contribution to looking after Wellington's citizens, as well as enacting civic values of a caring society. We similarly support the Council's proposal to investigate **supported living for homeless people**.
3. We also strongly encourage the council to **develop the north end of Adelaide Road** as medium and/or high density housing. We consider this site to be well-located for an exemplar housing project. This may need to be council-initiated in order to occur.
4. We likewise recommend that the Council **remove carpark requirements** from all residential developments in the city because car parking (including driveways) uses up land which could be used for higher density housing.
5. We also see a role for Council in facilitating housing in other sites, for example the **Karori Teachers' College** buildings could be adaptively re-used as housing within a wider context of the existing community facilities, in the manner of London's Barbican which mixes cultural uses (art gallery, theatre, library etc.) with residential. We believe that the Karori Teachers' College campus has the architectural infrastructure (dance studio, music

studio, meeting hall with great acoustics, lecture theatres etc) to become our very own Barbican of the South.

(C) Making Wellington Predator Free

6. We support the **Predator Free Wellington initiative** and the aim to extend the Predator Free project across the city. We consider this proposal to complement an ability for the city to implement green corridors, supporting native bird life, and providing a carbon sink reducing Wellington's net carbon emissions.

(D) Improving Wellington's Reputation as the Capital of Culture

7. We support the expansion of the city's **arts and cultural programme**. A vibrant cultural programme enriches civic identity and can be an important vehicle for interdisciplinary innovation and challenges to conventional and staid thinking.

(G) Improving Community Engagement

8. We appreciate the need for the Council to improve and increase community involvement in **council consultations**, but recent efforts (e.g. web interface for consultations e.g. cycle lane proposals), while well-meaning and hopefully increasing numbers of people participating, have also meant the obscuring of material through multiple web pages and links, making it difficult to know for sure if you have found all of the proposal you are trying to engage with.
9. We make two specific comments which we think will increase the validity of council work:
 - i. we believe that **increasing participation in local elections** is vital, and strongly encourage the Council to produce a campaign demonstrating to voters how the council impacts on their daily lives and why it is important to participate in elections and council consultations. This may require the skills of an external PR firm.
 - ii. we encourage the council to **commission professional visual and stated preference studies** to ascertain public opinion on built environment proposals.

(H) Continued Implementation of the Living Wage

10. We support the Council becoming an Accredited **Living Wage Employer**.

(I) Low Carbon Capital

11. We support increasing **car sharing in the city**. Rather than granting commercial car sharing central city car parks at no cost, we recommend that the council restrict the CBD to car sharing and electric vehicles only. We have addressed this more fully in our WCC Electric Vehicle and Car Share Proposed Sites submission (5 May 2017) (<http://architecture.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/AC-Traffic-Resolutions-EV-and-car-share-proposed-sites.pdf>)
12. We consider that the Annual Plan's commitment to addressing Climate Change is insufficient. **More needs to be done more quickly**. Initiatives can be cost neutral. The WCC also needs to be a model organisation in this regard, and model behaviour other organisations, and companies can achieve.
13. We encourage the Council to revise the District Plan to:
 - i. encourage adaptive re-use of buildings
 - ii. discourage car parking buildings and car parking in other buildings
 - iii. encourage green roofs and water sensitive urban design
 - iv. require waste minimisation plans

- v. remove requirements for car parks in residential developments

(J) Wellington Town Hall strengthening | Music Hub

- 14. We support the earthquake strengthening of the **Wellington Town Hall**.
- 15. We consider that it is vital for the WCC to play a **leadership role in earthquake strengthening** and both the Town Hall project, and strengthening of the Basin Reserve's Museum Stand, are key to this.
- 16. We also believe that the Council must also take a proactive leadership role in demonstrating **the importance of building maintenance** to prevent building deterioration which can make buildings vulnerable in earthquakes (e.g. the consequences of poorly maintained spouting). The long-term viability of existing buildings also reduces the carbon costs of rebuilding.
- 17. We consequently believe that the Council needs to put in **disincentives for deferred maintenance** and that this is as important as its other earthquake resilience activities.
- 18. An equally important aspect of earthquake strengthening is its relationship to heritage and the Council's role in maximising the potential for **heritage** (e.g. tourism and job creation) to contribute to the **local economy**, but also our **city's identity and character**. This is an important aspect of highlighting the city's past and ongoing cherishing of our city's arts and culture, and our reputation as the Capital of Culture.

(K) Resilience Initiative

- 19. We support the Council's proposal for **seismic monitoring** of selected buildings.
- 20. We also support increasing the seismic resilience of existing houses (e.g. securing subfloor structures), including cultivating a culture of building maintenance. Extending this thinking, we encourage the Council to establish a **earthquake building information bureau** of some description (this could be web-based) focussed on innovative, inexpensive ways to strengthen buildings, reduce building damage, and increase awareness of the need to ensure secure internal fixtures and fittings and the need for building maintenance. This could be supported by MBIE and informed by NZSEE, IPENZ etc.
- 21. We consider that Climate Change Initiatives will also increase our city's resilience.

(L) Antisocial street activity

- 22. We are hesitant about the proposals relating to "antisocial street behaviour" as this has significant potential to infringe on citizen rights to access space, which is a fundamental aspect of good urban design.
- 23. It appears to us that "antisocial street behaviour" is a complex urban issue, which frequently involves the (we believe inappropriate) aim to remove people, who have been excluded from sufficient welfare provision at state level, from public space.
- 24. We also believe that this is a relatively recent issue. We did not, for example, have material levels of begging in Wellington 10 years ago. We believe the question that should be asked is "Why does anyone in Wellington need to beg now?" and consider that addressing fundamental causes of begging etc. rather than censoring individuals and limiting their

access to public space is vital. We are proposing to spend \$31million on a movie museum - have we really got our priorities right when so many of our citizens need to beg on our streets?

Other issues

25. An aspect which we believe needs to be proactively addressed in WCC's annual and long-term plans is the city's **ageing demographic**. A successful city of older people will require new ideas about urban design in terms of accessibility, mobility, and inclusion. We encourage the WCC to better understand relevant issues and propose ways to anticipate how our city will alter because of the changing demographic profile of Wellington's citizens.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the WCC Annual Plan 2017-18 consultation. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



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