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Freepost Wellington City Council
Basin Redevelopment
Wellington City Council
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redevelopthebasin@wcc.govt.nz

**Re: Redevelop the Basin**

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 the following comments to make regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Basin Reserve.

Firstly, we appreciate the diversity of activities that the Basin has accommodated historically, and see facilitiating this diversity is an important aspect of any redevelopment.

**PERIMETER FENCE**

1. As we have noted in various avenues, the perimeter fence is a significant problem for sightlines around the Basin Reserve. We understand that several concrete pillars have heritage value, as do the J.R. Reid and S.C. Dempster Gates, but consider that there is potential to increase views into the Basin, by modifying the perimeter fence to celebrate key moments of permeability. Relevant factors might include the following:

    a) We understand that the Basin is not often used for ticketted events, meaning that a decision could be made to only use the Basin for free events, or that temporary fencing could be used to supplement what solid fencing, in the fashion of events at Hyde Park, is retained.
    b) We support increasing entrance points into the Basin, possibly including via the Museum stand, removing the perimeter fence could also facilitate this
    c) The Basin is not only the largest roundabout in the southern hemisphere - but possibly one of the most dangerous for pedestrians to cross (aside from at traffic lights of course). We believe that much of this is due to the perimeter fence blocking sightlines, meaning that traffic and pedestrians have limited time to react to each other. Increasing sightlines through the fence (e.g. at key points relative to desire lines: e,g, the pedestrian route to and from Pukeahu and the Museum) would increase safety of access.
    d) Removing the perimeter fence, or providing more visually transparent fencing, at the back of the R.A. Vance Stand, would enable the geometry of the building to be better appreciated. We see that recently this fence has been removed and we hope that this removal is a permanent decision.
    e) We support modifying the fence to widen the viewshaft between the Basin and along Kent and Cambridge Terraces, and along Adelaide Road, and to better facilitate cycling access.
    f) Modifying the embankment so that it is a landform barrier, operating as a secure fence, could also be worth investigating.

**EXTERNAL SIGHT LINES**

2. There are a number of views into the Basin from outside, including from Paterson Street, Adelaide Rd (above the John St intersection), and perceptual/imagined relationship because of the strong axial geometries.

3. The astute identification of these is important. The blocking of other views is also possibly important in order to give these iconic views impact.

4. These external-internal sightlines establish cultural significance and interrelationships across the broader heritage precinct, including symbolic connections and potential and actual views, to and from:
   a) Pukeahu National Memorial Park
   b) the Home of Compassion Crèche
   c) Government House
   d) Massey University (as the former Dominion Museum building, and site of the former Mt Cook Prison and barracks (see image below))
   e) Wellington College
   f) Queen Victoria statue on Kent/Cambridge Terraces
   g) Mounts Victoria and Albert

5. As well as places spatially external to the Basin, there are historic events and routes which are temporally external to the Basin. These include:
   a) important historic routes and relationships (e.g. from St Patricks, routes from Queens Wharf or parliament often via the Basin enroute to Newtown Park).
   b) military parades, royal visits, ANZAC Day parades, and protests etc.

6. In addition to physical design, there might be opportunities for digital interpretation (e.g. via smart phone apps, use of the scoreboard) to conceptually reference events (e.g. anniversaries), and historic uses, and to the Cricket museum, which we consider the architectural brief could useful contribute to conceptually. Examples include:
   a) the Otorohanga virtual moa park[1]
   b) Auckland transport's bilingual app "Whānau Fun Day on the Train"[2]
   c) Heritage NZ Heritage Trail Apps[3]

[1] Purcell, Brigette "Moa comes to life in 3D app" (2 August 2014) http://www.newshub.co.nz/environmentsci/moa-comes-to-life-in-3d-app-2014080217
[2] "A modern twist on Māori history on a mobile app" (28 July 2015) http://www.mch.govt.nz/a-modern-twist-on-m%C4%81ori-history-on-a-mobile-app
[3] Heritage New Zealand "Apps" http://www.heritage.org.nz/apps

**BASIN SITE GEOMETRY**

7. During the Basin Bridge Board of Inquiry a number of experts noted that the current site geometry of the Basin confines buildings to the NW half of the field, (the line between the J.R. Reid and S.C. Dempster Gates providing a key axis separating a semi-circle of buildings from the semi-circle of embankments). This seems to us to be an important geometry to retain. Another axis from the current position of the William Wakefield Memorial to the clock on the Museum Stand also exists.

8. This axial geometry supports the external street axes of Kent and Cambridge Tces and Adelaide Rd and the legibility of how the Basin is located within its wider context.

9. This existing relationship of built and unbuilt geometry suggests to us that the club house prefabs (between the Museum Stand and Groundsman's Cottage) would be the logical site for new building.

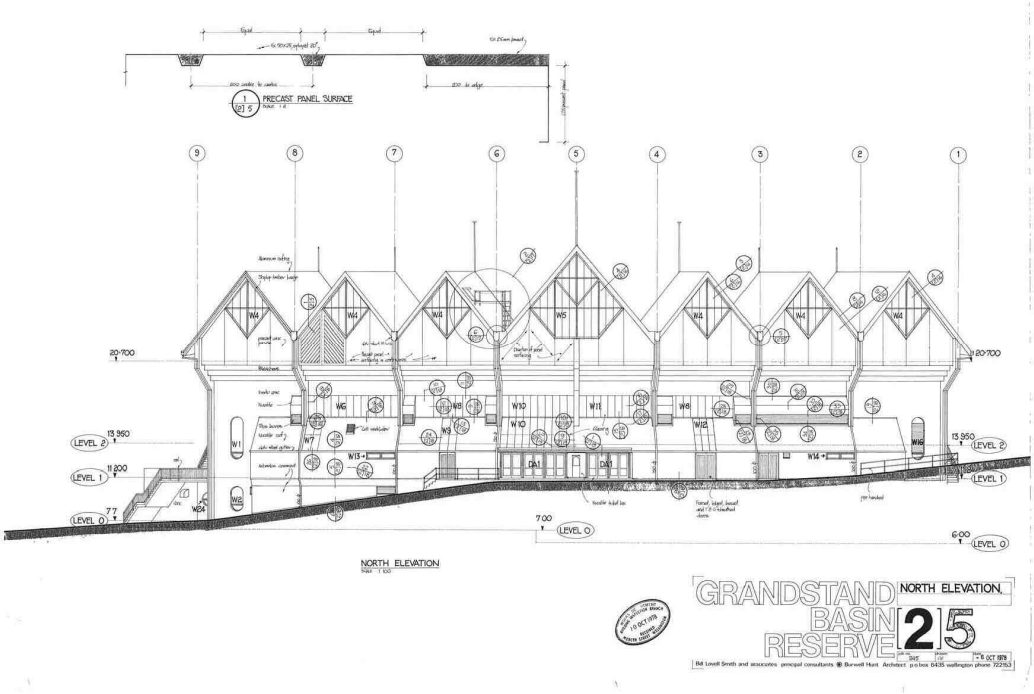
10. We support the demoition or removal of these prefabs, if needed, for the provision of new buildings (e.g. new players' facilities, sports museum)

**BASIN RESERVE PAVILION (MUSEUM STAND)**

11. We strongly support the retention of the Museum Stand for the following reasons:
    a) The Museum Stand is the quintessential cricket ground building. It grounds the character and scale of the place, and as such is a key historic reference point.
    b) We understand the current state of the building is due to deferred maintenance and the lack of good custodianship by the WCC. The WCC needs to demonstrate, to owners of heritage buildings, leadership with respect to earthquake strengthening and continuing maintenance. The Council cannot be critical of heritage building owners guilty of demolition by neglect if it is not willing to look after its heritage-listed buildings.
    c) The Council has just increased the budget for Peter Jackson's movie museum and convention centre by $15 million. We understand that retention of the Museum Stand is likely to cost in the realm of $7m.[4]
    d) The Museum Stand is registered by Historic Places Trust (as part of the Basin Reserve Historic Area no. 7441; Basin Reserve Pavilion Category 2, no. 1339) and listed in the WCC DP (ref: 449)
    e) Re-use of buildings is important for reasons of sustainability due to the waste of embodied energy which occurs when buildings are demolished. Being an organisation which promotes adaptive re-use is an important role for a Council promoting itself (through its policies) as having an environmental consciousness and aiming to reduce its green house emissions.

12. In stating our strong opinion that the Museum Stand must be retained we are very open to innovative re-use of the building, and the potential for public thoroughfare through the building, as an entrance into the Basin Reserve.

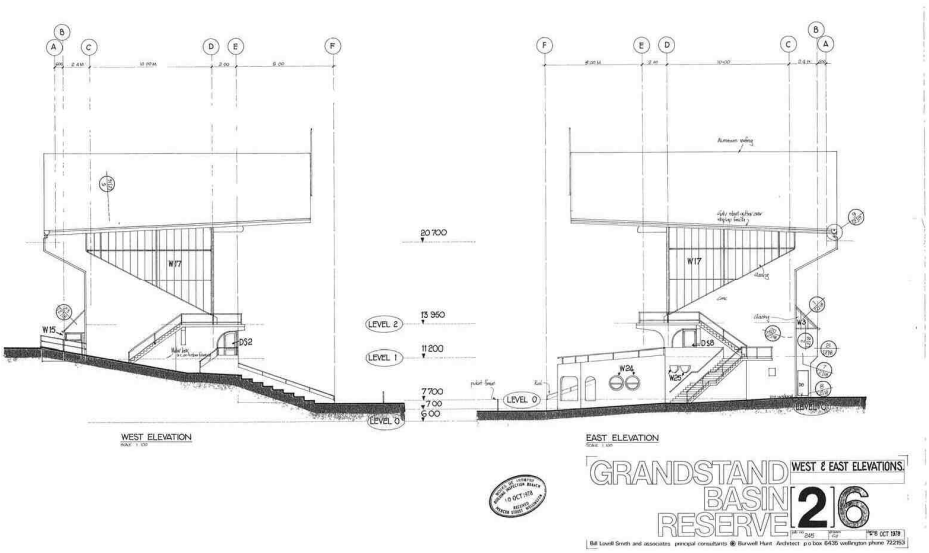
[4] The cost of repair has been cited as $8million, the cost of demolition $800,000. Gentry, Mark "Basin Reserve risks becoming "tire two" venue unless work hastens, says councillor" (27 May 2016) *Stuff* http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/cricket/80476364/Basin-Reserve-risks-becoming-tier-two-venue-unless-work-hastens-says-councillor




**R.A. VANCE STAND**

13. The Vance Stand is an incredibly elegantly designed building. The poor maintenance of the building means that it is in a shabby condition, which means the strength of the building's geometry can be difficult for the general public to read. Enabling this elegance to be clearly read in the renovation of the exterior - which might simply require replacement of some materials and an intelligent colour scheme (not necessarily derived from painting everything) - is important for the building's value to be understood.

14. Inside the Vance Stand is quite dreary and cold. But it also has some carefully considered geometries and material selection. Smart architectural decisions regarding what should been retained regarding interior materials etc. is needed, but the services are appalling (esp the heating) and appear to us to require a complete overhaul, supported by comprehensive insulation.




**THE EMBANKMENTS**

15. The embankments, which we understand date from the 1980s, both provide important elevated seating, and much of the nostalgic sentiment of the intimate atmosphere, as well as being (like the buildings) a cause of introversion. This introversion is only necessary because of the volumes of traffic which circumnavigate the Basin Reserve.

16. Extending the brick terracing further around the embankments would be appreciated.

17. As mentioned above, the embankments could be modified to provide the secure fencing.

**OTHER**

18. We wonder whether including permanent night lighting would be advantageous for 24 hour events.

In closing, we appreciate the current quality of the Basin Reserve, and are strongly of the opinion that any increase in size would be a problem. The Basin is cherished because of its elegant and intimate qualities, and shouldn't be required to compete in terms of capacity with the Caketin. In short, we urge the design team not to do things to the Basin for the sake of doing things, rather an invisible approach to architecture may be the more appreciated kind of intervention needed.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Proposed Redesign of the Basin Reserve. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

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