

11 July 2013

Whakatāne District Council
Private Bag 1002
Whakatāne 3158

Re: Proposed Whakatāne District Plan

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 and architecture.

The Architectural Centre strongly supports the inclusion of the Whakatāne Airport Building, 216 Aerodrome Road (Lot 1 DPS 75684) in the Whakatāne District Plan's Schedule of Built Heritage Features (16.5.1).

We congratulate the Whakatāne District Council for its foresight in recognising Roger Walker's Airport Terminal Building's regional and nationally significant building.

Roger Walker has been recognised for over quarter of a century as a significant New Zealand architect. He has been the subject of articles, a book, and an MA thesis (University of Canterbury), as well as being referenced in the international architectural press (e.g. Charles Jencks' *Architecture Today* (New York: Harry N Abrams, 1988)).

The Whakatāne Airport Terminal Building is similarly significant, it most recently being identified as a significant modern building in the Julia Gatley edited *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008) p. 181. The building was also a recipient of the 1975 Tourist Design Awards receiving the following citation:

"The terminal building was designed to put Whakatāne on the map while avoiding the repetitive, "boxy" design characteristic of many airport terminals. It is excitingly different yet has good flow patterns and clean separation of internal functions. The materials used keep the human element dominant so that passengers and baggage are not treated in a too similar manner."

We believe that the Terminal Building deserves heritage listing for several reasons. It was designed by one of the best known New Zealand architects of the latter half of the twentieth century, Roger Walker, and is typical of his innovative buildings of the 1970s. The building was widely published and respected by the architectural profession at the time. It is a commercial building in a similar, somewhat quirky, style to Walker's residential architecture. The scale of the building is deliberately small and domestic in order to relate better to the more human scale of a regional airport. The design was ground-breaking and fully appropriate for its time. Whakatāne is somewhat blessed to have such a unique member of its built heritage and has the opportunity to carefully and sensitively consider its retention and renovation. There are many examples around New Zealand of recent regional airport terminal expansions that have been carried out in ways that lack any relationship to the region or identifying nature, yet character is what makes New Zealand special to the many tourists who use such terminals. We strongly believe that buildings, such as Walker's Whakatāne Airport Terminal, are key to retaining such identity. The recent World Cup has only strengthened the nation's understanding of the significance of such regional identities for tourism.

This building is without any doubt, a special work by one of New Zealand's most interesting architects and is an important example of nationally significant architecture



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outside of the larger cities, which deserves a deal of respect. The Architectural Centre thanks you for pro-actively ensuring this very special building's preservation.

best wishes

Christine McCarthy
President, Architectural Centre

cc. Ann Neill, NZHPT Central Regional Office
Julia Gatley, Chair, Docomomo NZ