



the architectural centre inc.
PO Box 24178 Wellington

14 April 2018

Mayor and Councillors
Wellington City Council
P.O. Box 2199
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Tēnā koe Mayor and Councillors

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2018 regarding the former Wellington Teachers Training College (W TTC) at Karori. We note your desire to see "a genuine partnership developed with the landowner, Heritage New Zealand and the community to achieve the best possible outcome for all parties."

Since our letter, you will be aware that Ryman Healthcare have hoodwinked Heritage New Zealand (and it seems the council), with:

- (a) its request to Heritage New Zealand for a 20 working day extension of the submissions period as part of the W TTC listing process - deferring the process of listing, and
- (b) its application to the council for a certificate of compliance regarding the demolition of approximately 50% of the buildings on the Karori site.

This proposed demolition includes:

- (a) the gymnasium, which is the last and most refined design of a series of Minister of Education school gymnasiums built across the North Island,
- (b) the skybridges, which link Stage I and Stage II buildings and contribute an elegant vertical dimension and presence in the Lopdell Gardens, and
- (c) the buildings framing Lopdell Gardens - the premier landscape on the site

This situation is particularly frustrating to us, especially given that ten years ago, in the context of District Plan Change 58, the Architectural Centre asked that the Karori campus be added to the DP heritage list. The Committee report,¹ noted that:

With reference to the submitter 7 [Architectural Centre] who wishes to see the heritage list extended further, the Committee noted officer advice that *plans are now in place for the on-going research and continued expansion of items that are listed in the District Plan*. The Committee noted that many of the items identified on the submitter's suggested list have also been identified by Council and that any additional recommendations would be passed on to the heritage team within Council (emphasis added p. 10).

It is now 2018 and we are not aware of any plan change since DPC 58 that has expanded the list (other than DPC 75 that added six shopping centre heritage areas), or any other mechanism which has put into effect the stated "continued expansion of items that are listed in the District Plan."

¹ WCC Decision on District Plan Change 58: proposed Additions to Listed Heritage Buildings, Objects and Areas (27 June 2008) <https://wellington.govt.nz/~media/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/district-plan/changes/completed-changes/files/change58-decision.pdf?la=en>

We cannot understand your lack of desire to put in place meaningful protection for this heritage site, and your apparent lack of commitment to comply with the legal obligations of the Regional Policy Statement to identify and protect sites which meet the criteria set out in Policy 21. We cannot understand how you can think that lodging a requirement for a heritage order would prevent "a genuine partnership ... with the landowner, Heritage New Zealand and the community," and we recommend that you investigate heritage orders, so you understand how they could in fact facilitate the best adaptive reuse solution for the site.

As far as we see it, all that the council has achieved to date is an appearance of either naivety or irresponsibility with respect to the Karori campus heritage issues. Lodging a heritage order would never have prevented a genuine partnership, but rather would provide the council with the ability to safeguard the heritage of the site. As we understand it, lodging a heritage order is now the only option that you have to rebalance the power that Ryman have usurped from Heritage New Zealand and the community - neither of which, as we understand it, have been treated with anything like the respect due to a genuine partner from the developer.

We hope that you really do have a genuine interest in a positive heritage outcome for the site, and that you are driven by a desire for an outcome which maximises sustainability through the adaptive reuse of the existing buildings and the high levels of embodied energy on the site. The concrete these buildings are made of has many years left of useful life. This is an important site for New Zealand's architectural history, a fact supported by the complex's recent inclusion in the Deutsches Architekurmuseum (German Architecture Museum) exhibition on Brutalism in Frankfurt.

Rather than submitting to a regime of mediocre retirement home buildings (and missing the opportunity for a new vision of housing older people, which is meaningfully supported by active community engagement and interaction), we urge you to be open to the full potential of what the heritage re-use of the site might be - but the heritage values must be identified and protected first.

ka nui, ngā mihi


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cc Hon. Grant Robertson, Wellington Central MP