

25 October 2018

Committee Secretariat  
Transport and Infrastructure Committee  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington  
ti@parliament.govt.nz

**Re: Building Amendment Bill**

This submission is from the Architectural Centre. We are 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 Building Amendment Bill:

1. Generally we support the Bill. It appears to us to largely be commonsense amendments anticipating needs in post-disaster contexts.
2. However we do consider that in this case prevention is better than cure and strongly encourage the government to work to eliminate New Zealand's culture of deferred maintenance in parallel with this work.
3. In a similar preventative vein, we understand that an important issue in post-quake Christchurch was difficulty accessing information (e.g. council records for heritage and other buildings) due to relevant buildings being damaged or deemed vulnerable to aftershocks. We consider that increased provision for local body/council records of buildings to be digitally stored remotely would be prudent.
4. On a related matter, regarding requirements for information (e.g. s133BT), the Bill appears to not be cognisant of post-disaster contexts and the difficulties that can occur in accessing buildings, computers etc. to obtain information.
5. We appreciate the explicit acknowledgement of the need for different and national strategies regarding decision-making for heritage buildings.
6. We note the comprehensive definition of heritage for buildings, but ask that consideration be given to the impact of disasters on heritage landscapes and wāhi tapu and any need for specific strategies related to these. While the Building Act is unlikely to be the appropriate legislation for these, we encourage consideration regarding how they might be dealt with in related post-disaster legislation.
7. We also note, following Christchurch, the significant impact of economic



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pressure to recommence commercial activities, and/or accessing insurance pay outs impacting on demolition decisions. The issues as we see them are not simply confined to those of human safety.

8. We consider that an increasingly important factor to be acknowledged in decisions regarding whether or not to demolish a building is the value of embodied energy. This is a particular issue in relation to our point above with respect to economic pressure and we urge that, where needed, an holistic approach to economic evaluations be adopted.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Building Amendment Bill. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Nāku ihi noa nā

Christine McCarthy  
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