

**IN THE MATTER** The Resource Management Act 1991 (“the Act”)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of two applications for a land use consent under section 88 by **IPG CORPORATION LTD** to **WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL** pertaining to 114 Adelaide Road, Mt Cook

## **STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DAVID PEARSON**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 My name is David Alan Pearson and I am a registered architect and the principal of my own company known as DPA Architects.

#### **Qualifications and experience**

1.2 I hold the degree of Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Auckland and am an Associate of the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

1.3 In 1996, I founded the practice of Dave Pearson Architects Limited with the intention of providing expert heritage architectural services to the owners of heritage buildings. I have held the position of Principal of the company, now known as DPA Architects since that time. I have also attended specialist conservation courses at the Centre for Conservation Studies at the University of York in the United Kingdom.

1.4 I now have nearly 40 years of experience in the field of heritage architecture. This experience has included the design and oversight of many significant projects. In particular, I have acted as the conservation architect for the reconstruction of the Christchurch Arts Centre since 2013 as well as being involved in Christchurch since the 2010-2012 earthquakes. As a result, I have particular understanding of the need to upgrade unreinforced masonry buildings to enable them to better resist seismic forces.

1.5 I have also been involved in various projects where new buildings were constructed behind retained facades and successfully integrated to create a harmonious result. These projects have included the former Jean Batten Building which became part of the Deloitte Centre in downtown Auckland and

the integration of the Berlei Building in Nelson Street into what will be the NZ International Convention Centre.

- 1.6 DPA Architects has been recognised for its expertise by the receipt of a considerable number of architectural and heritage awards including UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards and national architectural awards from the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

### **Involvement in project**

- 1.7 In addition to an original proposal to demolish the building at 114 Adelaide Road, the applicant (IPG Corporation Ltd) made a decision to prepare an alternative scheme for the site whereby the two road frontages would be retained and restored while the interior would be deconstructed to enable a new building to be constructed behind the retained facades. I was then engaged to prepare a heritage assessment of the building and a heritage impact assessment to assess the impact of the proposed work on the building's heritage values.

- 1.8 I was then asked to provide a preliminary design for a new structure behind the facades which is essentially the scheme that is the subject of this hearing. I have now also been engaged to provide expert architectural and heritage expertise in this hearing before commissioners.

- 1.9 In preparing my evidence I have:

- Read the submissions.
- Read the officers reports and the appendices.

### **Code of Conduct**

- 1.10 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the 2014 Environment Court Practice Note and whilst this is a Council hearing, I agree to comply with it. I confirm I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions I express. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my sphere of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

### **Scope of Evidence**

- 1.11 In this case, we are considering two separate applications made to Wellington City Council.

- 1.12 The first application was made to WCC for the complete demolition of the building and is known as SR 464277.
- 1.13 The second is an application for partial demolition and construction of a new building. This is known as SR 490717.
- 1.14 My evidence relates to only SR 490717.
- 1.15 My evidence is structured as follows:
- (a) A summary of my original report which took the form of a Heritage Assessment and Impact Statement.
  - (b) Comments on the submissions and in particular, that from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.
  - (c) Comments on the officers S42A report.
  - (d) My conclusions.

2. **ORIGINAL REPORT**

- 2.1 The following section constitutes a brief summary of my original Heritage Assessment and Impact Statement. The purpose of this document was firstly to gain an appreciation of the former Tramway Hotel and its heritage values. Secondly, the document assessed the impact that the proposed development would have on the heritage values of the building. The document included a brief historical account, a physical description of the place and its architectural style, a description of the proposed work and a description of the impact of the proposal on the building's heritage values.
- 2.2 The present building on the site, located at 114 Adelaide Road, Mt Cook, Wellington was originally known as the Tramway Hotel. It has been well described in the evidence of others and I will not repeat it. I note that Mr Leary for the applicant and the officer in their S42A Report have provided detailed site descriptions which I accept.
- 2.3 The building was constructed in 1899. The ground floor contained the reception, bar areas, a dining room and a kitchen, while the upper floor contained bedrooms and bathrooms.
- 2.4 The two road frontages, facing Adelaide Road and Drummond Street, were designed in an Italianate classical style that was commonly used for commercial buildings in the Victorian/Edwardian period. The hotel was

constructed of brick masonry and the two road frontages had ornate plastered detailing which included window surrounds, pediments, finials, string courses and cornices. The doors and windows were made from timber and the roof had a simple mono-pitched form and is likely to always have been sheathed with corrugated steel. In comparison with the road frontages, the rear faces of the building are extremely plain with no architectural merit.

2.5 Overtime, the building has been extensively altered. In 1942, the Wairarapa area was subjected to a series of earthquakes. Following this event, the ornate parapet with its decorative finials and the cornice that ran around the two street facades at high level and which were some of the most significant elements of the building were removed and replaced with a low level parapet and a concrete bond beam. The roof form of the roof behind the parapet was also modified to reduce its height behind the lower replacement parapet.

2.6 The use of the building has changed over time and with every new owner it appears that the interior was refurbished to the point where virtually nothing of the original interior finishing and detailing remains. A 2016 report by conservation architect, Ian Bowman, noted that almost all of the interior ceilings, walls and wall linings had been removed from the ground floor. On the upper floor, some of the bedroom walls and almost all of the original skirtings and architraves had been removed.

2.7 Currently, the ground floor is in poor condition, having been completely stripped out and there is evidence of extensive water ingress throughout the building.



Interior views of building, ground floor.

2.8 My report provided a description of the proposed work including the restoration of the external facades and the reinstatement of the original parapet as far as practicable. The new building was described, including the rationale for the form as a relatively solid punctuated by a series of openings.

The intention was that it should complement the facades of the hotel, without in any way resorting to replication.

- 2.9 The impacts of the proposed development on the heritage values of the former hotel were then described with the conclusion that the impacts would be no more than minor and would be mitigated, at least in part, by positive aspects of the proposal which included the restoration of the facades.

### 3. **THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 This is the consideration of two applications in one process.

- 3.2 The total demolition of the building; or

- 3.3 The partial demolition of the building and construction of a new building on the site. My evidence addresses this option.

- 3.4 This option would involve the demolition of the rear walls and roof of the former hotel and what remains of the interiors. Once this occurs, a new building will be constructed behind, but set back, from the facades.

- 3.5 The hotel is currently listed as being earthquake prone and currently has a section 124 notice requiring it to be demolished or strengthened. The proposal to retain the facades includes work to underpin and strengthen them to resist future seismic forces.

- 3.6 The work will also include the refurbishment of the two street facades including wall surfaces and joinery and the reinstatement of the parapet and cornice which were removed following the 1942 Wairarapa earthquakes as close as possible to their original form. Any defects in the facades will also be remediated.

- 3.7 Internally, the ground floor will be used for reception, bar and restaurant facilities while the first floor will contain a series of hotel suites.

- 3.8 The new building will rise six floors above the Tramway Hotel facades and will also contain a series of hotel rooms and suites. The lower five floors will be set back a distance of three metres from the street facades, while the top level will be set back a further two metres from the floors below.

- 3.9 The five levels of the new building above the hotel will be clad with precast concrete panels with a series of openings in them for windows and doors. The concrete panels will be painted or stained to reflect the red brickwork on the hotel below.

4. **IMPACT OF PROPOSAL ON HERITAGE VALUES**

4.1 One of the primary aims of the proposal is to ensure that what I consider to be the most significant parts of the Tramway Hotel, being the two street facades, are restored to their original form as far as practicable and preserved for the future, which would obviously not occur should the entire building be demolished.

4.2 I fully understand the desirability of retaining heritage buildings in their entirety where possible, rather than just the street facades, however, in this case, the rear elevations were never designed to be on show, hence they are completely devoid of all ornamentation in contrast to the street facades. Further changes over time have left them with little heritage value.



Exterior views of rear of hotel.

4.3 Similarly, the roovescape is often an important part of the building. However, in the case of the Tramway Hotel, the original roof had just a simple mono-pitched form which was then altered when the parapet was removed. The proposal also involves the removal of the existing interior walls, ceilings and floors, however, as previously discussed, little of the original interior fabric remains.

4.4 Particular thought was given to the form of the new building. This resulted in the proposed colour, designed to reflect the brickwork of the hotel, as well as the window and door openings, the spacing and proportions of which take cues from those in the historic building below.

4.5 The facades of the new building have been deliberately kept plain and free of decoration. This will ensure that there is a clear distinction between the original building and the new structure. It will also avoid attention being drawn away from the hotel and allow the hotel to remain as the focal point.

- 4.6 I also accept the desirability of limiting the height of roof top additions to heritage buildings, however, in this case, I understand from the evidence of others that the proposed height is necessary to maintain the financial viability of the project which has to include the considerable cost of strengthening and restoring the facades.
- 4.7 The proposal will obviously impact on the heritage values of the building, firstly by the loss of original fabric, including the rear facades and the roof and what remains of the interior. Secondly, the proposed new structure will also alter the perception of the historic hotel.
- 4.8 During the design phase of the project, ways were explored to mitigate negative impacts on the historic hotel arising from the proposal. Firstly, the new building was set back from the two street facades of the hotel. The top level was then set back further from the floors below. The setbacks have been designed to reduce the apparent height and bulk of the new structure.
- 4.9 The street facades of the former hotel will be restored as far as practicable with the reinstatement of the parapet and cornice. Any defects on the facades will also be remediated. These actions constitute positive impacts on the heritage values of the building and will partly mitigate the negative aspects of the proposal.
- 4.10 The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (revised 2010) states in Article 8 Use "Where the use of a place is integral to its cultural heritage value, that use should be retained". The building in question was constructed specifically to be used as a hotel. Within the ground floor were bars, the reception area and a dining room while a series of bedrooms and bathrooms were located on the floor above. Often, over time, the use of a heritage building will change and it may be used for purposes that are very different from its original use and this can result in a loss of heritage values. In this particular case, the old hotel will effectively continue to be used for its original purposes with reception facilities, bars and restaurants on the ground floor and hotel suites above. This is also seen as being a positive aspect of the proposal.
- 4.11 Having the building reused, essentially for its original hospitality purpose will result in increased vibrancy and vitality in this area of Mt Cook in a way that has been lacking as of late.

## 5. **REQUIREMENTS OF WELLINGTON DISTRICT PLAN**

- 5.1 In my original report, the proposal was assessed against the Assessment Criteria in Chapter 21 HERITAGE RULES of the Wellington District Plan.

- 5.2 In response to the assessment criteria, positive aspects of the proposal included the fact that the street elevations were to remain essentially in their present form with the only work being undertaken comprising the restoration of the facades and the reinstatement of the parapet and cornice at the upper level of the building.
- 5.3 The Assessment Criteria require that work proposed to a heritage building respects its scale as a way of ensuring that new work is not visually dominant, particularly where roof additions are proposed. It is understood that Council may support the addition of a single level. Although the proposal seeks to provide a roof addition considerably taller than a single level, in my opinion, the setting back of the new structure from the historic facades and the simplified form of the addition will ensure that the original building is not dominated by the addition. It is also my understanding that the project would not be viable if only a single storey addition was permitted.
- 5.4 The criteria question whether a proposal that envisages the restoration of former design elements maintains a high degree of authenticity and the extent to which the work is necessary to ensure structural stability and to enable the continued use of the building. In response, efforts will be made to ensure the authenticity of any reconstructed elements and the proposed structural work will ensure structural stability, as well as enabling the building to be used in the future.

6. **COMMENTS ON OFFICERS S42A REPORT**

- 6.1 I have read the Officer's S42A report prepared by Peter Daly and note that while he recommends that resource consent be refused, he acknowledges that the proposed development incorporates a number of positive outcomes, notably the redevelopment of a derelict site and the seismic upgrade of an earthquake prone building. He also considers that the adverse effects are potentially resolvable and reserves the right to reconsider his position.
- 6.2 At various places in his report, Mr Daly makes reference to the heritage report prepared by Chessa Stevens, Consultant Heritage Advisor to Wellington City Council and I have also read that report.
- 6.3 In paragraph 128 of the Heritage Report, Ms Stevens considers that the tower is flat and visually uninteresting and that it would benefit from "finer detailing". In paragraph 225 (d) she suggests considering a design that provides greater

transparency in a manner that is similar to the southeast corner, that is a glass box.

6.4 As noted, it was a conscious decision to have the tower plain without ornamentation as a way of ensuring that it would not compete with the highly decorative Tramway Hotel. It was also a deliberate decision to make the proposed building relatively solid with window and door openings cut into it as opposed to the ubiquitous glass box that is so often used when additions are provided to heritage buildings. In my view a simple building with minimal ornamentation is a legitimate architectural response either as a standalone building as seen in the examples below or as an addition to a heritage building.

6.5 I also suggest that the proposed façades with openings in a relatively solid wall could be far more interesting than an all glass façade and relate better to the heritage building.



6.6 Nevertheless, I believe that refinements could potentially be made in the way of providing some relief to the facades by the addition of simplified mouldings, while still ensuring that the proposed building does not compete with the old hotel. I look forward to exploring some of these options.

6.7 In her paragraph 225, Ms Stevens suggests that the following changes could be made including the reconstruction of the parapet in its entirety. She also suggests that the new building setback could be increased beyond the current provision and that historic fabric at ground and first floor levels should be retained to a minimum depth of one room of the original building.

6.8 In response, I understand that full reinstatement of the parapet is something that the applicant is prepared to explore, although that would obviously involve additional cost to the project. With respect to the setback, the current proposed setback is close to the depth of a single room. Again, any increase in the setbacks would have financial implications, arising from a reduction in floor area, unless this could be compensated by additional height.

- 6.9 In response to the retention of historic fabric, as noted, the preliminary structure seismic strengthening proposal envisaged underpinning the external walls of the building which would require drilling rigs to be brought into the building. It is my understanding that this operation would require the removal of internal fabric in this zone including the floors. As previously noted, other than the basic structure, there is no fabric of heritage value within this zone, particularly at ground floor level where all original linings and finishes have been removed.
- 6.10 In paragraph 225 (d), Ms Stevens suggests that the vertical and horizontal divisions and fenestration pattern of the proposed tower be aligned with the historic facades below. That may be worth exploring, however, it should be noted that the regular spacing of windows in the former hotel relates directly to the internal layout which contains a series of small bedrooms each of which has a single window. The trend now is to provide suites with their own bathrooms and other facilities, rather than small individual rooms, making a regular layout of windows more problematic.
- 6.11 In paragraphs 226 following, Ms Stevens suggests a number of conditions, should the application be approved. These include the submission of a documentary record of the building, an inventory of materials to be salvaged, preparation of a Heritage Management Plan, the submission of detailed drawings, including the parapet and the signing off of changes to windows. These conditions are acceptable to the applicant. A condition requiring the preparation of a conservation plan would also be acceptable.

## 7. **SUBMISSION BY HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND POUHERE TAONGA**

- 7.1 The building is not included in the List of Historic Places as compiled by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT). NZHPT has, however, made a submission in opposition to the proposal.
- 7.2 In its submission, HNZPT makes reference to its Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidance Sheet 14 Partial Demolition of Historic Buildings and Sheet 12 Alterations and Additions to Historic Buildings. Guidance Sheet 14 include a set of principles, a checklist for assessing the proposed partial demolition of buildings and a checklist for Façade Retention of Buildings.

- 7.3 While there is no conservation plan in place, the proposal seeks to retain the parts of the building that are likely to have the highest heritage value, namely the two road facades. The rear elevations have been extensively modified over time and, in my opinion have little architectural merit. Mr Ian Bowman who has visited the building and subsequently prepared a heritage assessment for it makes no mention of the rear elevations, suggesting he saw little merit in them.
- 7.4 In his report, Mr Bowman also noted that the interior has changed significantly over time with modifications that included the demolition of almost all the interior walls in the ground floor, along with much of the ceiling and wall linings. On the upper floor, he noted that some walls had been removed, that almost all the original architraves and skirtings have been removed and the area has generally been relined. All this suggests that there is little fabric of heritage value remaining within the building.
- 7.5 Sheet 12 Alterations and Additions to Historic Buildings contains a series of principles and checklists that HNZPT intends should be the basis for additions and alterations to historic buildings. The principles are well meaning, such as the desirability of retaining as much internal and external fabric as possible and respecting the design, form, scale, materials, workmanship, patina of age, colours, contents, location, curtilage and setting....
- 7.6 However, in my opinion, the Guidelines are perhaps unnecessarily restrictive. In the case of the Tramway Hotel, every effort has been made to preserve the fabric of highest value, in particular, the two street facades. The other facades were not intended to be anything other than purely utilitarian in design and, in my opinion, have low heritage values. Similarly, the roof which was always only a corrugated steel lean-to which has previously been modified and the interior which has been modified almost beyond the point where the original layout can be discerned also have low heritage values.
- 7.7 The Guidance Sheet also says it is important to ensure that new work is of a scale and location that it does not dominate the heritage place...The current proposal is essentially about giving what remains of the hotel the best chance of survival. The significant facades will be retained, strengthened and restored, missing elements such as the parapet will be reinstated and remedial work will be undertaken to the facades.
- 7.8 HNZPT considers that the new building dominates the two storey facades, which is precisely why particular care was taken to produce a simple building that did not compete with the ornate existing facades. The proposed work to

the retained facades and especially the proposed strengthening work is likely to be costly and this will need to be recouped to ensure the project remains viable. Clearly this will not happen if a new structure is limited to perhaps one or two floors above the existing building.

- 7.9 In my opinion, the proposed design does comply with many of the checklist requirements in Guidance Sheet 12. These include the fact that the new building will be set back from the current facades and it will clearly be distinguishable from the original building.
- 7.10 Many of the checklist points appear to assume that the new addition will be a separate standalone structure and smaller in scale than the original building. Obviously, that cannot apply in this situation as the existing building occupies the majority of the site and as previously explained, an addition that is of a smaller scale is unlikely to provide the financial return that will ensure the project remains viable.
- 7.11 If designed carefully, a new building can provide a dynamic addition to a heritage building where the two structures interact with one another to provide an exciting combination of old and new together.
- 7.12 The Heritage New Zealand submission makes reference to the ICOMOS NEW Zealand Charter (revised 2010) and I accept that it is a widely accepted set of conservation principles. In Article 8 Use, the Charter notes that the conservation of a place of cultural heritage value is usually facilitated by the place serving a useful purpose. At the moment that cannot happen as the building has been condemned as being earthquake prone.
- 7.13 If consent is granted, Heritage New Zealand would consider amendments to the application that include preparation of a condition assessment that would also outline the repairs that might be required to the facades, improvement in the degree of retention of the present building and further details on the impact of strengthening works on the historic fabric. Consideration could be given to putting these amendments in place.

## 8. **Conclusion**

- 8.1 The former Tramway Hotel is a relatively rare example of a turn of the Twentieth Century hotel in Wellington, with the two street facades being designed in the commercial Italianate Classical style.
- 8.2 Externally, the two street facades have generally retained their original form, although the original decorative parapet and cornice were removed following

a series of earthquakes. The interiors have been remodelled on numerous occasions as the building changed hands and now bear little resemblance to their original form with virtually all the original linings and trim having been removed. The interiors are currently in a dilapidated condition.

- 8.3 The building has now been deemed to be earthquake prone and must either be structurally upgraded or demolished.
- 8.4 The applicant has applied to either demolish the building or to retain and structurally upgrade it. Due to the considerable likely cost of upgrading the building, a proposal has been prepared to partially demolish it, retaining only the street façades. A new building is proposed comprising two levels behind the historic facades and one below ground level. Above the hotel, six new levels would be constructed, set back from the historic facades.
- 8.5 The proposed new building has been designed to reflect the facades of the hotel but in a simplified form as a way of ensuring that it does not detract or draw attention away from the historic facades.
- 8.6 The retained historic facades will be repaired and restored and the parapet and cornice lost after the earthquakes will be reinstated. The interior will be completely refurbished and the building used again for hospitality purposes as it was originally designed. These are positive aspects of the proposal and will at least partially mitigate aspects that are considered to detract from the building's heritage values.
- 8.7 The building is scheduled in the Wellington District Plan and efforts have been made to ensure the proposal complies as near as practicable with the heritage provisions of the District Plan. The building is not listed by Heritage New Zealand, nevertheless, the proposal has taken account of HNZPT Guidelines for partial demolition of, and additions and alterations to, heritage buildings.
- 8.8 The height of the proposed building appears to be the main obstacle to acceptance of the scheme. However, I note that council's heritage advisor, Ms Stevens, considers that a tower above the building may be acceptable if some changes were able to be made and these may be worth exploring.
- 8.9 In conclusion, the former Tramway Hotel is a rare example of an early Wellington hotel with the two street facades retaining a high degree of authenticity. Every effort should be made to preserve the parts of the building with the highest heritage values for the future.

- 8.10 There may be different ways of achieving that goal, however, whichever way is selected, it must be financially viable. Relying on the evidence of others, if what remains of the hotel is to be preserved for the future, the current proposal would appear to be a realistic way of ensuring that the essence of the building survives, while also ensuring a reasonably financially viable outcome which must be the aim of every building owner.
- 8.11 If consent is refused, the future of the hotel will continue to remain uncertain.

**David Alan Pearson** B Arch ANZIA  
November 2021