
REPORT 6
(1215/52/IM)

DECOMMISSIONED TARANAKI STREET HERITAGE MEN'S TOILETS

1. Purpose of Report

To seek the Committee's approval to undertake consultation as part of the Request for Proposal process to develop the decommissioned toilet building and surrounding urban public space in Taranaki Street.

2. Executive Summary

The Taranaki Street toilets are located at the intersection of Taranaki Street and Courtenay Place. The building was decommissioned as a public toilet in 1994 and is included in the Heritage List of the Wellington City Council District Plan.

The building is a focal point for the new urban park in Courtenay Place and is an integral component of a grouping of listed heritage buildings on that intersection.

Through moderate development, the building may be able to be adapted for a new use whilst retaining the important heritage features of the exterior. With an innovative new use, the building would make a valuable contribution to the urban park and more generally to this part of Courtenay Place.

The Council previously accepted a proposal to develop the site into a wine bar and furniture store. However, the developer did not proceed with this proposal and the agreement lapsed.

Officers consider that an appropriate development of the building would ensure:

- The retention and maintenance of the heritage listed building, and
- Activation of this part of Courtenay Place.

In order to offer an attractive redevelopment proposition, the Council would ideally offer part of the surrounding area of legal but unformed road to be used for outdoor seating or similar. In this circumstance, consultation would be required as the urban park area falls within the provisions of s138 of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receives the information.*
- 2. Notes that Officers will be seeking expressions of interest to develop the decommissioned Taranaki Street toilet building.*
- 3. Authorises Officers to conduct public consultation under section 138 of the Local Government Act 2002 in the event that any proposed development seeks to incorporate any of the land surrounding the building.*
- 4. Notes that Officers will report back to the Committee following consultation.*

4. Discussion

Some years ago, the Council called for proposals to develop the building/site. The successful respondent did not get the project started within an acceptable timeframe and he ultimately withdrew his proposal. At that time, the new Courtenay Place Park was undergoing a transformation and it was agreed that we would delay any new Request for Proposal (RFP) process until the park was finished and the space had a chance to develop its new identity.

In the meantime, there have been a number of enquiries from people wanting to develop the site.

Advice to the Strategy and Policy Committee on 11 March 2010, noted that Officers were exploring alternative uses for this site. It is now proposed that the Council publicly calls for proposals for a new use. Proposals will be evaluated by a panel including representatives from Property, Roading, Urban Design & Heritage, and the Project Management Office.

The area immediately surrounding the building is considered a park under section 138 of the Local Government Act 2002 so any use of this area will require consultation. Officers intend to incorporate consultation with affected stakeholders into the RFP process,

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

As part of the assessment of any proposals that may impact the park we will need to consult with affected stakeholders. The results of the consultation will be reported back to SPC if such proposals incorporate a desire to occupy the surrounding areas.

We intend to focus public consultation on the importance of adaptive reuse of the heritage building. A key consideration is that if this building is not used it is likely to fall into further disrepair (it is no longer suitable as a public lavatory facility).

4.2 Heritage

The building is listed in the District Plan Heritage List. This listing concerns the façade and roof of the existing building.

Heritage advice is that this is a high profile site with a prominent structure and surrounds. It is important that any plans for the building capitalise on this and that any adaptive reuse takes advantage of the prominence of the structure and surrounding fence.

The former toilet building is an interesting design. There are few buildings of this type and function remaining. There are other New Zealand examples of former toilet facilities that have been adapted for a range of uses (eg Howe Street toilets in Auckland are now a café).

A proposal that respects the building and its heritage values is important. It would be preferable to retain the current scale of the building. Medium or high rise is not appropriate for this site.

There is no particular preferred use. It is more dependent on how the building is used and the extent of modifications that may be required to fulfil the requirements for the specific use.

4.3 Road

Legal advice states that the land incorporating the building footprint and surrounds is legal road by virtue of implied dedication. This means that a road stopping may be required to enable leasing of the site.

The Council's Principal Transport Planner has provided guidance on the desired outcomes of any proposed redevelopment of the site and surrounds.

Key transport outcomes are to ensure unimpeded pedestrian access along either side of the decommissioned toilets, and possibly an improved pavement width on the Courtney Place side (which is currently restricted to a very narrow width).

4.4 Long-Term Council Community Plan Considerations

Redevelopment of this area would contribute to the Council's goal of creating a compact, vibrant and attractive city. Through a measured redevelopment of this space the Council could reactivate this part of Courtenay Place and provide a contemporary use for a valuable heritage building whilst continuing to maintain road safety and pedestrian permeability.

4.5 Potential Assessment Criteria

Council assessment criteria (approved during the last RFP) will be incorporated into the upcoming RFP process, namely:

- Financial viability, credibility and development experience
- Council contribution
- Compatibility with Courtenay Place Precinct and Park Objectives
- Urban design assessment
- Heritage considerations

5. Conclusion

Officers would like to see the building adapted for another appropriate use in order to ensure the upgrade and ongoing use of this heritage building.

In order to offer an attractive redevelopment proposition the Council will need to offer the option of using part of the surrounding area of legal but unformed road.

Legal advice is that this would form a park under s138 Local Government Act 2002 and consultation would be required before this could be leased.

Contact Officer: *Tracy Morrah, Senior Property Specialist, Property*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

Redevelopment of this area would contribute to the Council's goal of creating a compact, vibrant and attractive city. Through a measured redevelopment of this space the Council could reactivate this part of Courtenay Place and provide a contemporary use for a valuable heritage building whilst continuing to maintain road safety and pedestrian permeability.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Ultimately, this project is intended to generate Council revenue by way of lease income.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

The land on which the building stands has been identified as Te Aro Pa.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision. The report reflects the views and preferences of those with an interest in this matter who have been consulted with.

5) Consultation

Affected parties have been identified. It is proposed that consultation be targeted to key stakeholders.

6) Legal Implications

Council's lawyers have been consulted during the development of this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report recommends certain measures which are inconsistent with some existing WCC policy, such as the Engagement Policy.