

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991
(RMA)

AND

IN THE MATTER of an application by New Zealand
Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust to the
Wellington City Council for a resource
consent to reinstate a sign on the building
located at 2 Jervois Quay, Wellington (**the
Application**)

**EVIDENCE OF RICHARD KNOTT
ON BEHALF OF NEW ZEALAND FRUITGROWERS' CHARITABLE TRUST**

(Urban Design and Heritage Expert)

22 November 2022

1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

1.1 My full name is Richard John Knott.

1.2 I hold the following qualifications:

- (a) Post Graduate Diploma Building Conservation, School of Conservation Sciences, Bournemouth University (2002)
- (b) Master of Arts Urban Design, University of the West of England (1995)
- (c) Bachelor of Planning, Victoria University of Manchester (1989)
- (d) BA(Hons) Town and Country Planning, Victoria University of Manchester (1988)

1.3 I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute and the UK's Institute of Historic Building Conservation. I am also an elected full member of the Institute of Highway Engineers and a Chartered Town Planner (Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute).

1.4 To assist with my assessment of the visual impact of proposals, I undertook the Planning Institute of Australia's training in Landscape and Visual Assessment in October 2019.

1.5 I have worked in the areas of special character, heritage, urban design and planning since 1989 and throughout my career. My work has included:

- (a) Whole of city study to identify, assess and recommend Historic Heritage Areas for Hamilton City Council (report completed 2022; work ongoing leading to hearings in 2023).
- (b) Town Centre masterplan for Opotiki Town Centre (completed 2021).
- (c) Masterplan for Featherston (ongoing – jointly with Ree Anderson Consulting).
- (d) Masterplan for Opotiki Harbour and Wharf (completed 2022).
- (e) Spatial plan for Taumarunui (completed 2022 – jointly with Ree Anderson Consulting).
- (f) Masterplan for 65Ha site for residential development at Foxton Beach (completed 2022).
- (g) Advice to a significant number of heritage building owners regarding re-use, alteration and repair, ranging from medieval to post-modern buildings.
- (h) Assessment of many proposals to alter heritage buildings.
- (i) Various work with developers for urban brownfield sites and greenfield sites (scale varies).
- (j) Author of various conservation and heritage design guides.

1.6 I am a qualified hearing commissioner, with a chair's endorsement. I have sat as independent planning commissioner (panel member and/or Chair) on over 40 resource consent and plan change hearings for Hamilton City Council, Whangarei District Council, Taupo District Council, Tauranga City Council, South Wairarapa District Council and Auckland Council. I often sit on hearings panels when specialist historic heritage, special character or urban design expertise is required. I am a member of the hearings panel for the Auckland Council Intensification Planning Instruments Plan Changes, and related Regional Policy Statement and Plan Changes to the Auckland Unitary Plan; hearings due to commence in 2023. I am also a panel member for the similar Tauranga plan change, with hearings also due to commence in 2023.

- 1.7 I have provided independent advice on over 50 digital signs and billboards on sites across New Zealand. I am very familiar with the issues associated with digital signs. I provided expert advice to the Embassy Theatre Trust in relation to its application to vary conditions on its consent and at the subsequent Environment Court appeal (where the matter was resolved through mediation). I was also the urban design specialist for the applicant for the now existing billboard at 10 Brandon Street (approximately 150m to the north of the site) and the consented (and proposed varied) billboard at 83-87 Waterloo Quay (approximately 1km to the north of the site).
- 1.8 I visited the site and the surrounding area on the 7th February 2022, to specifically consider the effects of the proposed sign. However, I have visited the general area and passed by the site on a large number of occasions as I regularly visit Wellington. I also spent time in the immediate area when undertaking my site visit for 10 Brandon Street. I have viewed existing digital signs in various locations around Wellington, elsewhere in New Zealand and overseas, and as a result of this and my involvement in other sign/billboard applications have a good understanding of the issues raised by such proposals.
- 1.9 In preparing my evidence I have reviewed all of the submissions received on the application and have reviewed the section 42A report prepared on behalf of the Wellington City Council (**Council**).
- 1.10 This statement of evidence does not set out full details of the proposal, as these are already well covered within the evidence of Mr Aburn, the Assessment of Environmental Effects (**AEE**) and other application documents. However, in summary, I understand that the sign proposed to be reinstated was first constructed in 1963 and consisted of an area dedicated to advertisement and an area dedicated to the weather forecast. A photograph of the building with the sign in place is included below as Figure 1. I understand that the main words on the sign were outlined in neon. The associated support structure remains on the building (see Figure 2 below).
- 1.11 It is intended to upgrade the existing structure and to add a 13m(w) x 4m(h) digital sign face; this is a similar dimension to the maximum size static sign which could be accommodated on the sign structure as existing. As was previously the case, the sign will include an area showing weather and time information. The images shown on the new digital face will have a minimum display time of 8 seconds, with a 0.5 second dissolve between images.



Figure 1: The building with billboard in place, 22nd November 1996 (retrieved from <https://archivesonline.wcc.govt.nz/nodes/view/122269>)



Figure 2: Building as existing with structure to support sign at roof level (photo RKL 7th February 2022)

2. INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

2.1 I was engaged by the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Charitable Trust (Applicant) to provide an independent peer review of the proposal to reinstate a sign on the existing structure at roof level on the building. In my memorandum, dated 6 April 2022, I:

- (a) Provided comment on Archifact's report 'Huddart Parker Building – Signage, Wellington Central, Wellington - Assessment of Effects on Historic Heritage'.
- (b) Considered the visibility of the sign structure and proposed sign.

2.2 In my report I noted that the building:

- (a) Is a scheduled heritage building in the Wellington City District Plan (in that it is included within the Chapter 21 Appendix – Heritage List: Areas, Buildings, Objects, Trees and Maori Sites).
- (b) Is also located within the Post Office Square Heritage Area and that there are various other heritage listed items in the local area.
- (c) Is not included on the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga 'New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero'.

2.3 I confirmed that it was my opinion that:

- (a) The Archifact report is based on a sound and well-accepted methodology, addresses all matters which I would expect it to consider and provides an accurate description of the building and the local area.
- (b) I accepted and support Archifact's assessment against the 21D.3.1.5 assessment criteria.
- (c) I accepted Archifact's overall conclusions.

2.4 In relation to the Visibility of the Sign Structure and Proposed Digital Sign I found that the proposed digital sign which will be fixed to the existing sign structure will not be a dominant feature in views from:

- (a) Customhouse Quay and Post Office Square and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context.

(b) Locations in Grey Street and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context.

2.5 As such, I set out that it would have a no greater than minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses outlined in the Environment Court's Practice Note (2014) (**Code**) and have complied with it in preparing this evidence. I also agree to follow the Code when presenting evidence to the Independent Hearing Commissioners. I confirm that the issues addressed in this brief of evidence are within my area of expertise, except where I state that I rely upon the evidence of other expert witnesses. I also confirm that I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my opinions.

4. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

4.1 I have been asked to provide evidence in relation to the heritage and character value of the building, and the visual amenity of the sign proposed to be reinstated on the Huddart Parker building.

4.2 My evidence covers:

- (a) The Surrounding Environment (section 6)
- (b) Visual Amenity Effects (section 7)
- (c) Historic Heritage and Character Effects, including alignment with Rule 21D.3.1 (section 8)
- (d) Comments on the Council Report (section 9)
- (e) Comments on submissions (section 10)
- (f) Conclusions (section 11).

5. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

5.1 The sign proposed to be reinstated was first constructed in 1963 and consisted of an area dedicated to advertisement and an area dedicated to the time and weather forecast. The main words on the sign were outlined in neon. The associated support structure remains on the building.

- 5.2 It is intended to upgrade the existing structure and to add a 13m(w) x 4m(h) digital sign face; the sign will include an area showing weather and time information. The images shown on the new digital face will have a minimum display time of 8 seconds, with a 0.5 second cross fade between images.
- 5.3 The overall impression of Post Office Square is that it is an area dominated by traffic and pedestrian and cycle movement, rather than being a pleasant urban environment, enclosed and activated by attractive buildings.
- 5.4 There are limited opportunities to view the existing support structure, and reinstated sign, from within the south sections of Post Office Square. The visual effects of the sign from these locations would be very low (it is commonly accepted that very low or negligible visual effects are equivalent to a less than minor adverse effect).
- 5.5 In more distant views from the north, from Customhouse Quay and the northern section of the Square, the proposed sign, will be viewed against the backdrop of the existing tall buildings located to the south and south-west of the site. At the distance required to easily view the sign structure and proposed digital display, the sign represents a relatively small feature in a relatively expansive view. The proposed digital sign will not be a dominant feature in these views and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, the visual effects of the sign would be low; it is commonly accepted that a low visual effect is equivalent to a minor adverse effect.
- 5.6 From locations in Grey Street and Queens Wharf the sign structure is already seen as extending above the existing building. Given the historic existence of the sign structure, and that this same structure will be utilised for the new digital sign (albeit that it will be strengthened), the addition of the digital billboard face will have little impact on these views, with the face being viewed at an angle and the existing structure still being visible. The proposed digital sign will have a low visual effect and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, I consider that it would have a minor effect on the amenity of the area.
- 5.7 Additionally, I have concluded that the proposed reinstated sign will not have a more than minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.
- 5.8 I have assessed the sign against the matters of discretion at 21D.3.1.5 to 21D.3.1.11 and the Design Guide for Signs. My assessment shows that the sign is considered favourably against these.

5.9 Overall, I consider that the proposed digital sign, which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from locations in Customhouse Quay, Grey Street and Queens Wharf and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. It will not have a more than minor effect on the visual amenity of the area or heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

6. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

6.1 The building is located on the southern side of Post Office Square, a triangular space formed at the intersections of Jervois Quay, Customhouse Quay and Grey Street. The building is located at the corner of Jervois Quay with Grey Street.

6.2 In views from the north, from outside of Post Office Square, the impression is that the Square is well formed and enclosed, as the Huddart Parker Building and the adjacent 89 Customhouse Quay are both viewed against the backdrop of taller buildings, and the towers above the Intercontinental Hotel (which forms the west side of the space) are easily viewed.

6.3 The impression when within the space is somewhat less positive:

(a) Alongside the site, Jervois Quay is a six lane road; three lanes in each direction with a narrow planted central median. The dominance of Jervois Quay and the relatively low scale (three storey) of the buildings on the east side of this impacts on the apparent enclosure of the Square, particularly to drivers passing by on Jervois Quay.

(b) Whilst the seven storey Huddart Parker Building does provide a significant presence to the Square, with a corresponding degree of enclosure, the adjacent three storey 89 Customhouse Quay and the Intercontinental Hotel (west side of the Square), which has a two storey podium, do not have sufficient scale or presence to successfully contain the space.

(c) Whilst the section of carriageway to the front of the Huddart Parker Building has been significantly narrowed, and both this and the section of Customhouse Quay passing through the space have been raised to provide a continuous surface with the pedestrian areas, the roads, including Jervois Quay remain dominant features which separate the surrounding buildings from the central space.

(d) The space to the front of the Huddart Parker Building appears to be more focused on providing pedestrian and cycle access from Lambton Quay to

the waterfront, and associated facilities there, than being an integral part of the Square.

- (e) Whilst there are some areas of seating within the Square and areas of grass alongside Jervois Quay, the latter appears to be focused on providing space between busy Jervois Quay and hard surfaced public space than providing areas for recreation.
- (f) There is little activity at ground floor level of buildings and limited building entries onto the space. As such the buildings around the space do little to activate it. This task is left to the single storey newsagent/dairy (former Tram Shelter) at the northern end of the Square and sometimes temporary food stalls within the space. However, the windows in the newsagent/dairy building are generally covered by coloured film and advertisements and the entrance to the building is narrow. As a result, it provides little activation to the space.

6.4 As a result, the overall impression of Post Office Square is that it is an area dominated by traffic and pedestrian and cycle movement, rather than being a pleasant urban environment, enclosed and activated by attractive buildings.



Figure 3: Former Tram Shelter illustrating the advertisements over the windows – this is a wide angle view (equivalent to a 38mm lens on a full frame 35mm camera) Note that the top of the Huddart Parker Building could not be seen even were the tree in the foreground not there (photo RKL 14th September 2020)

7. VISUAL AMENITY EFFECTS

7.1 As described in my original memo, on my site visit in February 2022 I explored the local area to identify key viewpoints of the existing sign structure and the proposed digital sign, to understand any effects associated with the changing images and any visual amenity effects on the wider environment from this.

7.2 The proposed sign will incorporate a 0.5 second transition time from one image to the next, where one image fades out as the other fades in (cross-fade). Having viewed a large number of digital billboard installations to inform my understanding of their potential effects, I consider that the utilisation of a 'cross-fade' is critical in ensuring that the change from one image to another does not attract attention in the way that an immediate change from one full image to the next would.

7.3 I believe that the inclusion of this dissolve will ensure that pedestrians and drivers with a view of the billboard will not become aware of the transition of one image to another unless they happen to be looking directly at the signs at the very moment that this takes place. On this basis I have assessed the billboard as though it were a static sign.

7.4 I consider that the most significant viewpoints are:

- (a) Locations in Customhouse Quay to the north of the site
- (b) Locations in Grey Street to the west and from Queens Wharf to the east.

Locations in Customhouse Quay to the north of the site

7.5 There are limited opportunities to view the existing support structure from within the Square. Pedestrians and other users would not naturally view the sign when within the southern section of the Square, or in Customhouse Quay close to the building. As such I consider that the visual effects of the sign from these locations would be very low¹ (it is commonly accepted that very low or negligible visual effects are equivalent to a less than minor adverse effect).

7.6 In more distant views from the north, from Customhouse Quay and the northern section of the Square, the existing sign structure and proposed digital display will become visible. As set out previously, the existing sign structure remains on the building, and as noted in the Archifact report, the Council heritage inventory record includes recognition that the *'building once held community sentiment and connection for the temperature display and clock that was a prominent feature'*.

¹ See Appendix 1 – Scale of Visual Effects.

7.7 Representative views are shown in Figures 4 and 5. In these views the sign structure, and the proposed sign, will be viewed against the backdrop of the existing tall buildings located to the south and south-west of the site, in the same way that the retained sign structure is currently viewed against this backdrop and the previously operational sign was viewed against the backdrop (see Figure 1). As such, the sign structure, and proposed new sign, do not break the skyline. In addition, at the distance required to easily view the sign structure and proposed digital display, the sign represents a relatively small feature in a relatively expansive view.

7.8 In view of the above, I consider that the proposed digital sign, which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from Customhouse Quay and Post Office Square and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, I consider that the visual effects of the sign would be low; it is commonly accepted that a low visual effect is equivalent to a minor adverse effect.



Figure 4: View of the building from the north (from west side of Customhouse Quay) (photo RKL 7th February 2022)



Figure 5: View of the building from the north (from east side of Customhouse Quay) (photo RKL 7th February 2022)

Locations in Grey Street to the west and from Queens Wharf to the east

- 7.9 A representative view from Grey Street is shown in Figure 7. From locations in Grey Street and Queens Wharf the sign structure is already seen as extending above the existing building. The sign structure has been a feature of the building since 1963 and has previously displayed brightly coloured advertisements with neon outlines, as illustrated in Figure 1.
- 7.10 Given the historic existence of the sign structure, and that this same structure will be utilised for the new digital sign (albeit that it will be strengthened), the addition of the digital billboard face will have little impact on these views, with the face being viewed at an angle and the existing structure still being visible. The same is also true of a view from the south-west from Customhouse Quay, as shown in Figure 7.
- 7.11 In view of the above, I consider that the proposed digital sign, which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from locations in Grey Street or Queens Wharf, will have a low visual effect and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, I consider that it would have a minor effect on the amenity of the area.



Figure 6 (left): View of building from the west along Grey Street (from close to intersection with Lambton Quay)



Figure 7 (Right): Partial view of the upper level of the building and existing billboard structure from the south-west in Customhouse Quay

8. HISTORIC HERITAGE AND CHARACTER EFFECTS

8.1 In my memorandum I considered the Custom House Quay and Grey Street viewpoints, as considered above, as to the effects of the proposed reinstated sign on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building and the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area. I concluded that:

- (a) I considered that the proposed digital sign which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from Customhouse Quay and Post Office Square and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, I consider that it will not have a more than a minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.
- (b) I considered that the proposed digital sign which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from locations in Grey Street and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, I consider that it will not have a more than a minor effect on the

heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

8.2 Having now considered the visual effects of the proposal, section 7 above, I stand by my original conclusions that the proposed reinstated sign will not have a more than minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

8.3 Rule 21D.3.1 provides that signs on listed heritage buildings are *Discretionary Activities (Restricted)*, with matters of discretion bring:

- (a) Sign design, location and placement
- (b) Area, height and number of signs
- (c) Illumination
- (d) Fixing and methods of fixing.

8.4 The plan sets out a number of assessment criteria to enable the consideration of these matters. I have considered each of these criteria below from an urban design and heritage perspective:

Assessment Criteria	Assessment
<p>21D.3.1.5 The extent to which any sign including supporting structures detracts from the heritage significance or values of a heritage building or object.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The supporting structure is mainly as existing, although will be supplemented to allow the installation of the new digital billboard face. If required, this could be designed to have minimal long term physical effect on the retained structure and could be removable. - The Council recognises the social values of the clock and weather information which formed part of the earlier sign installations; this is reflected in the submissions received. This will be reinstated as part of the installation of the new digital face, albeit as an image on the digital face. The font for this could be chosen to reflect the previous time and weather information – see Figure 1.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As described above, I do not consider that the sign will have a more than a minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.
<p>21D.3.1.6</p> <p>Whether any sign detracts from the architecture of the building including decorative detailing, structural divisions, windows or doorways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sign is located above/behind parapet level. It does not detract from existing decorative detailing, structural divisions, windows or doorways.
<p>21D.3.1.7</p> <p>Whether additional signs will result in clutter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are no other large signs on the building or in the vicinity of the proposed reinstated sign. As such the reinstated sign will not result in clutter.
<p>21D.3.1.8</p> <p>The extent to which the quality of the design of the sign and the standard of graphics complement the building or object.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This appears to relate to the detailed design of the sign (given that the images on the digital display will alter). - The sign will utilise the existing structure. In common with the majority of digital signs, the new digital screen will be simple and clean cut in appearance. - The rear of the digital panel could be enclosed to ensure a neat appearance.
<p>21D.3.1.9</p> <p>Whether the means of fixing the sign to a listed building or object including associated cabling or wiring for illuminated signs will adversely affect the heritage fabric and heritage values of the listed building or object.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As noted above, the supporting structure is mainly as existing, although will be supplemented to allow the installation of the new digital billboard face. If required any additional structural members/frames could be designed to have minimal long term physical effect on the retained structure, and could be removable.
<p>21D.3.1.10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The intensity of the illumination is addressed by

<p>Whether intensity of illumination will adversely affect the heritage values of the building or object.</p>	<p>Mr Russ Kern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I note, based upon my experience, that the proposed 8 second dwell time for each image, with 0.5second cross fade between images, is consistent with outdoor advertising good practice (and with permitted activity standards in other plans), and will not give the appearance of flashing or rapidly altering images.
<p>21D.3.1.11 The extent to which signs comply with the Design Guide for Signs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Design Guide for Signs requires consideration of a number of topics, including: Scale and Location of Signs - The sign will be located on an existing structure and is of a similar size to the maximum static sign which could be supported by this. It is a position which has been historically associated with the display of advertisements, along with current time and weather information. The WCC heritage inventory recognises that the <i>'building once held community sentiment and connection for the temperature display and clock that was a prominent feature'</i>. The reinstatement of the advertisement and time and weather information has been welcomed by a number of submitters. - As discussed above, I have established that the sign will not be a dominant feature in the area or on the building; recognising that it will be viewed against a backdrop of large buildings, and that clear views of it are not available of it from locations in close proximity and that it is most visible from more distant positions.

Relationship to Surrounding Context

- As above, the sign will not be a dominant feature in the area, and only has a low visual effect on views from Customhouse Quay, to the north, from Grey Street and from Queens Wharf. It will have an appropriate relationship to its context.

Visual Obtrusiveness

- Amongst other things this discusses whether the signs are visually dominating, distracting or visually obtrusive. As discussed above, I have established that the sign will not be visually dominating or visually obtrusive. The proposed 8 second dwell time will ensure that the sign will not appear distracting; the utilisation of a cross fade between images will ensure that the change of one image to the next does not create a 'flash' or other effect which would attract the attention of a passer-by. A passer-by would therefore be unlikely to be aware of the change of one image to another unless they happened to be looking directly at the sign when a change of image took place. The sign would therefore not be visually distracting.

Visual Clutter

- There are no other large signs on the building or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed reinstated sign. As such the reinstated sign will not result in clutter.

Signs and Road Safety

- Road safety matters are addressed by Mr Brett Harries.

Design Quality

- The sign will utilise the existing structure. In common with the majority of digital signs, the new digital screen will be simple and clean cut in appearance.
- In my experience, billboard operators ensure that all images displayed are of an appropriate image resolution and show as high quality graphics.

Maintenance

- The location of the sign, behind the parapet of the building, does not present any unusual maintenance issues.

Signs and Heritage

- As discussed above, the proposed reinstated sign will have no more than a minor effect on the heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

Illuminated/Animated Signs

- The proposed reinstated sign will not include animation.
- As discussed above, the proposed 8 second dwell time will ensure that the sign will not appear distracting; the utilisation of a cross fade between images will ensure that the change of one image to the next does not create a 'flash' or other effect which would attract the attention of a passer-by.
- Effects of illumination are discussed by Mr Russ Kern.

9. COMMENTS ON COUNCIL REPORT

9.1 I have provided below comments on the two specialist reports which are relevant to my expertise.

Urban Design Report

9.2 The Urban Design Assessment SR513399 prepared by Sarah Duffell, Senior Urban Designer RMA, includes an assessment of the proposal against the ODP Design Guide for Signs.

9.3 Ms Duffell concludes that the sign is inconsistent with the Design Guide for Signs in several key areas, and that the sign is inappropriate for this location and that Urban Design would not support the application being approved.

9.4 I address each of the matters raised in Ms Duffell’s conclusion below:

Ms Duffell Conclusion	Response
<p>It is not integrated with the architecture of the building; rather it is placed separately on the rooftop of it. It does not achieve a relationship with the building below it in terms of scale or placement of façade elements. It detracts from the visual qualities of the host building.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The position of the reinstated sign has been led by the position of the existing sign structure. - The existing structure is offset to the west, recognising the asymmetrical shape of the building. In practice this offset is not apparent as the existing north façade of the building is not symmetrical. - The reinstated sign would therefore not detract from the visual qualities of the host building.
<p>The placement on the rooftop alters the silhouette of the building. Appreciation of the architectural detail of the top of the building is diminished and the large flat panel display is at odds with the architectural and landscaping detailing of the wider context.</p> <p>The sign would be dominant in views along Customhouse Quay and Waterloo Quay for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sign and display face are set behind and away from the parapet. The architectural detail of the building is therefore not altered. - As illustrated in Figures 2, 4 and 5 in most views from the north, the building is seen against a backdrop of taller buildings. It is this wider cityscape of large buildings which is dominant in

a considerable distance. The Huddart Parker building terminates south-facing views in these locations, and the addition of a large, illuminated sign would not enhance this in an environment that is generally devoid of other signs displaying advertising.

The sign would also be obtrusively visible in the views between Grey Street and the waterfront.

The sign would detract from the public space qualities of Post Office Square (a heritage area) and the waterfront (a public space of city-wide significance.)

From several key public space viewpoints the image on the sign would not appear in full, detracting from these viewpoints with pointless additional visual distraction.

these views, rather than the architectural detail of the parent building or landscape within the wider context. As such the proposed billboard has low visual effects on the views (equivalent to a minor adverse effect).

- In views from the east (Queens Wharf) and West (Grey Street) there would be only partial and side views of the existing structure and new digital face.
- As set out above, the sign structure has been a feature of the building since 1963.
- Given the historic existence of the sign structure, the addition of the digital billboard face will have little impact on these views; I consider that the proposed digital sign will not be a dominant feature in these views and will have a low visual effect and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. As such, I consider that it would have a no more than minor effect on the amenity of the area.
- In the full text of her assessment, Ms Duffell questions the value of the existing sign structure. As well as having some heritage interest as the framework for the previous signage, from an effects perspective, I consider the existence of the structure important as it already itself has a visual effect on the appearance of the building.
- In relation to effects on the public

	<p>space quality of the Square; as noted there are limited opportunities to view the existing support structure from within the Square. Pedestrians and other users would not naturally view the sign when within the southern section of the Square, or in Customhouse Quay close to the building. As such I consider that the visual effects of the sign from this location would be very low (it is commonly accepted that very low or negligible visual effects are equivalent to a less than minor adverse effect).</p>
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Historic Heritage Evidence

9.5 The Heritage Assessment Evidence prepared for the Council by Chessa Stevens, Principal Conservation Architect and National Built Heritage Lead at WSP New Zealand Ltd, includes a comprehensive assessment of the proposal against the ODP Assessment Criteria, heritage best practice, whether there is justification for negative effects on the building and whether there is appropriate mitigation of effects.

9.6 I do not intend to provide a detailed response to Ms Stevens’ assessment against Rule 21D.3, as I have already included my own assessment above and comments on the submissions below which I consider addresses the matters covered within Ms Steven’s evidence. I also note that Mr Wild is providing historic heritage evidence to this hearing.

10. COMMENTS ON SUBMISSIONS

10.1 I note that David Stevens, Steve Maitland, Lenie Emmerson, Michael Gaffaney and Simon Hegarty all submit that the sign is a familiar part/feature of the Wellington landscape; with particular mention being given to the provision of time and weather information. As noted above, given the digital design of the proposed new sign display, there is no reason why a similar font and design can be used for the new time and weather information, to provide a further link to the previous form of the sign.

10.2 Stout St Chambers and Boffa Miskell indicate in their submission that the sign is not compatible with the character and heritage of the building and surrounding area, and Boffa Miskell also indicate that the Sign will result in a loss of visual amenity and will dominate the streetscape.

10.3 I have provided an assessment against both historic heritage and visual amenity matters above. I have in both cases found that the proposed digital sign, which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views of the building and, would have a minor effect on the amenity of the area and on the historic heritage values of the area.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Overall, I consider that the proposed digital sign, which will be fixed to the existing sign structure, will not be a dominant feature in views from locations in Customhouse Quay, Grey Street and Queens Wharf and will appear as an integral part of the wider urban context. It will not have a more than minor effect on the visual amenity of the area or heritage significance of the Huddart Parker Building or the Post Office Square Historic Heritage Area.

Richard Knott

22 November 2022

Appendix 1 – Scale of Visual Effects

EXTREME	Total loss of the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape resulting in a complete change to the landscape or outlook
VERY HIGH	Major change to the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape or a significant reduction in the perceived amenity of the outlook
HIGH	Noticeable change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape or reduction in the perceived amenity or the addition of new but uncharacteristic features and elements
MODERATE	Partial change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity
LOW	A slight loss to the existing character, features or landscape quality
VERY LOW	The proposed development is barely discernible with little change to the existing character, features or landscape quality
NEGLIGIBLE	The proposed development is barely discernible or there are no changes to the existing character, features or landscape quality