

Dear Jas and Commissioners

Historic Places Wellington Inc and Wellington's Character Charitable Trust oppose the proposal to remove the Toomath Building at 43-47 Ghuznee St from the heritage schedule to the District Plan.

Although the building is partially demolished, the facade remains. That facade has heritage (and streetscape) value and is part of the Cuba St heritage precinct.

Continued recognition of its heritage value is consistent with the independent Commissioners' decision of April 2022 in relation to the Former Adelaide Hotel (114 Adelaide Rd).

In that case Commissioners decided that retaining the two street facing facades was a "sustainable use" of the site "in a manner that acknowledges the historic heritage values attaching to the site". Commissioners decided that "façadism" was better than total demolition of the building "if a viable economic alternative is not available to the owner".

Accordingly the Toomath Building facade (ideally plus an appropriate amount of set back distance) should be retained on the heritage schedule.

The Adelaide Hotel decision recognised that a new (higher) building could be constructed above and behind the heritage building's facade thus providing an economic use. In the case of the Toomath Building that is precisely what's been envisaged for its redevelopment prior to the fire. WCC has been working with the owners to consent such a scheme.

HPW and WCCT therefore seek the retention of at least the facade on the heritage schedule. That would be consistent with the substance of the decision for the Adelaide Hotel.

HPW and WCCT are also of the view that rapid removal from the heritage schedule of buildings subject to arson sends the wrong signal about the potential advantage of such dangerous and unlawful activity. There should be no fast tracking if de-listing for heritage buildings burnt down by suspected arson. Particularly, as in this case, the owner (Dayal Govan) of half the shares of the registered owning company has died and legal ownership maybe unclear.

Regards
Felicity Wong
for HPW and WCCT
21 Hay St
Wellington 6011
0212410441