

**BEFORE A HEARING PANEL OF
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL**

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

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Wellington City Proposed District Plan

**EVIDENCE OF PETER ALAN COOP ON BEHALF OF PARLIAMENTARY
SERVICE AND ITS SUBMISSION ON THE PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN**

PLANNING

Historic Heritage chapter

24 April 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My full name is Peter Alan Coop and I am a self-employed resource management consultant.

1.2 This statement of evidence relates to the hearing on submissions with respect to – District Wide Matters – Historic and Cultural Values – Historic Heritage Chapter. I am authorised by the Parliamentary Service to give this statement of evidence on their behalf.

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

2.1 My qualifications are a Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Town Planning, and a Master of Public Policy.

2.2 I have over 40 years' experience in town planning/resource management. This includes 7 years as Wellington City Council's manager of resource consents and 6 years as the Council's manager of strategic planning and policy development. For the last 25 years I have worked as a resource management consultant for Urban Perspectives Ltd and since 2022 in self-employment.

2.3 My experience has included the preparation of numerous applications for resource consents, applications for private District Plan Changes, submissions on Proposed Plans, and the preparation and presentation of expert evidence at Council, Board of Inquiry and Environment Court hearings.

2.4 For the last 6 years I have provided resource management advice and assistance to Parliamentary Service in relation to proposed development of the Parliamentary Precinct, the applicable operative statutory provisions, and the Council's Proposed District Plan (**PDP**).

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses outlined in the Environment Court's Practice Note (2023) (**Code**) and have complied with it in preparing this evidence. I also agree to follow the Code when

presenting my evidence to the hearing panel. I confirm that I consider that the issues addressed in my 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 My evidence will cover the following matters:

- (a) The significance and importance of the Parliamentary Precinct;
- (b) Parliamentary Service's submission on provisions in the Historic Heritage chapter of the PDP;
- (c) The Council Officer's section 42A report on Historic Heritage; and
- (d) My conclusions.

4.2 In preparing this statement of evidence, I confirm that I have read the following documents:

- (a) Parliamentary Service's submission and further submission;
- (b) Historical and Cultural Values – Historic Heritage chapter;
- (c) The Wellington City Proposed District Plan Hearing Stream 3 – Historic Heritage, Notable Trees and Areas of Significance to Māori report, prepared under section 42A of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**the Section 42A Report**) and its associated appendices (insofar as it relates to Historic Heritage).

5. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT

5.1 The Parliamentary Precinct is of significant importance to Wellington and New Zealand. Its presence is the result of Wellington being the Capital City of New Zealand. The Precinct accommodates Parliament, the Executive, Members of Parliament, and ancillary functions and services.

5.2 The Precinct and the activities carried out in it are why Wellington accommodates the wide range of Government Departments, Consulates, businesses and service organisations that are essential to Wellington's economy, cultural life and wellbeing.

5.3 The Precinct has been progressively developed and redeveloped over many years to try and keep pace with the evolving democratic needs of New Zealand. This has included the demolition of buildings that have become too small, additions to existing buildings (such as the Parliamentary Library) to add floorspace, the construction of new buildings (the last one being the Executive Wing), and alterations to accommodate changing circumstances (for example security).

5.4 For these main reasons, I consider that the Council's District Plan needs to recognise and provide for the unique importance of the Parliamentary Precinct, with specific provisions that anticipate and provide for the evolution of the Precinct.

5.5 During the Council's early consultation on the PDP, I suggested, on behalf of Parliamentary Service, that the PDP should recognise and provide for the unique importance of the Parliamentary Precinct by way of "Parliamentary Precinct Zone" to distinguish it from being "just another part of the City Centre Area". Comparable provisions in the PDP are the "Tertiary Education Zone" that covers the Kelburn University Campus, the "Hospital Zone" that covers Wellington Hospital, and the special recognition the PDP's City Centre objectives, policies and rules give to the Civic Centre Precinct – a recognition that is not given to the Parliamentary Precinct. My suggestion was not taken up but as a concept I continue to consider it has merit.

5.6 The three main buildings on the Precinct (the Executive Wing, Parliament House and Parliamentary Library) are heritage buildings under the PDP. The history of the Precinct, as briefly summarised in paragraph 5.3 above, has demonstrated that these buildings need to be adapted from time to time to meet the evolving needs of Parliament, including alterations and additions so that they remain fit for their essential purpose.

6. PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE'S SUBMISSION ON THE HISTORIC HERITAGE CHAPTER

6.1 As set out in Parliamentary Service's submission, Parliament has unique requirements for its buildings. The Parliamentary buildings have requirements that no other organisation in New Zealand has. By their very nature, they should be both secure enough to protect our high-profile politicians and staff and accessible enough to promote and encourage access to our democracy by all New Zealanders. They need to be efficient in their use, yet they need to transform every three years to reflect the changing size and work habits of parties in Parliament.

6.2 In light of this, the submission of Parliamentary Service seeks changes to the Historic Heritage chapter to reflect:

- (a) the importance of heritage buildings being able to be altered and added to so that they can continue to be used in a practicable and functional way; and
- (b) the importance of the Parliamentary Precinct to Wellington, and ensuring the efficient, effective and safe functioning of buildings for Parliament and the Executive.

6.3 Provisions in the Historic Heritage chapter acknowledge that heritage buildings need to be well maintained, resilient, and kept in sustainable long-term use. However, in my view the concept of "sustainable long-term use" does not go far enough to reflect that buildings need to be able to be used in a practicable and functional way. I consider that the notified provisions will unduly constrain decision-makers from recognising factors

that genuinely warrant consideration in relation to the Parliamentary Precinct.

7. THE SECTION 42A REPORT

7.1 I have read the Council officer's report and concur with the recommendations made in support of the Parliamentary Service submission points. In summary, the Officer has recommended that Parliamentary Service's submission on the following provisions is accepted:

- (a) Historic Heritage – Introduction
- (b) HH-03
- (c) HH-P4
- (d) HH-S4

7.2 However, I do not agree with the recommendation to reject the submission that seeks change to policy HH-P7. Parliamentary Service has sought to include (for additions, alterations and partial demolition of heritage buildings and structures) the following wording as a matter to "have regard to":

"For the Parliamentary Precinct, the extent to which the proposal supports the efficient, effective and safe functioning of Parliament and the Executive".

7.3 The officer's reasons for recommending rejection are *"I do not consider that a specific clause relating to the Parliamentary precinct is necessary"*, because the policy as worded in the PDP *"provides a framework sufficient for all heritage buildings and structures including those within the Parliamentary Precinct"*.

7.4 My view is that it is desirable that the clause is added to HH-P7 so that when assessing an application for adaption of a heritage building within the Precinct, future decision-makers are directed to have specific regard to the function of the Parliamentary Precinct. This will ensure that the Precinct's important and unique role for Wellington, and New Zealand, is taken into account. Further, such a provision acknowledges why heritage

buildings and structures on the Precinct (more so than other heritage buildings and their curtilage) will need from time to time to be adapted, to meet the evolving needs of Parliament and the Executive for buildings and structures that are efficient, effective and safe. This need is unique to the Parliamentary Precinct.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 I therefore recommend that HH-P7 is amended to include, in the list of matters that must be had regard to, the additional wording:

“For the Parliamentary Precinct, the extent to which the proposal supports the efficient, effective and safe functioning of Parliament and the Executive”.

Peter Alan Coop

24 April 2023