

As per the Heritage Architects report Masterton Town Hall has high architectural and aesthetic value, having been standing in its present location since 1916.

Heritage Buildings protect New Zealands heritage, the town hall is both valuable and irreplaceable.

This building represents the history of Masterton and is an iconic community identity.

Situated on Chapel Street, State Highway 2, it is seen by locals, visitors and tourists as they travel through Masterton. Sited in a prominent position, it is well recognised as a Masterton landmark.

It is the ^{most significant} largest of 3 heritage buildings in what can be considered a heritage precinct, along with at least 8 other buildings on Perry Street which are on the council heritage list.

Although it has changed appearance since 1916 due to the 1942 earthquake it is a unique style of building, seldom found in New Zealand, which gives it a high rarity value and is much admired.

This building has much history attached to it, it has been the location of many cultural activities, balls, weddings, school prizegiving, fairs and entertainment. It holds many memories for our community.

The destruction of our heritage and history is not acceptable.

The proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan "encourages the community to support the protection and conservation of historic heritage".

Historic heritage is recognised as important to Wairarapa's identity. The plan discourages demolition of scheduled heritage building unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable alternatives and having regard to the cost of repair.

The plan discourages demolition of heritage scheduled buildings instead control earthquake strengthening by protecting as much as practicable the architectural feature and details that contribute to the heritage values of the building, and retaining original facade appearance as much as practical.

Full demolition goes against all the relevant historic policies outlined in the proposed combined plan of the region.

These historic resources are important as they represent the past and provide insights into the way Wairarapa communities and settlements were developed, they also contribute to the character. *of our district*.

The Masterton community have shown their support for our Town Hall by a "Hands around the Hall" demonstration, a further rally the following year, a petition which was suggested as being the largest petition the council has received and a public meeting by Masterton Action Group with a proposed plan to retain the facade and municipal building which was well received.

Masterton District Council in their Long Term Plan said that "the council believes the loss of the heritage aspect of the Town Hall precinct will be unacceptable to our community", their preferred option ~~at that time~~ was to demolish the Town Hall and municipal building, retain the facade and build a new Town Hall.

I'm not sure how granting the resource consent will have a positive affect for the community.

Considering the environmental impact, this is a huge building to demolish, we would be better to retain the two heritage facade sides, and build a new town hall building within the footprint reusing some of the materials from the existing building. It can be designed with modern flexible spaces for the whole community with the heritage aspect of the facade retained, and invite every culture within our community to participate.

It cannot be considered environmentally friendly to demolish an old building and build a new building.

The application from Russell Hooper cites the example of Wellington Town Hall refurbishment price over run as a reason for concern, as to why our Town hall should not be strengthened or saved.

Wellington has a significantly larger population and Town Hall size, it is on reclaimed land, and has had a major upgrade including fitting base isolators and designed for a world class acoustic system.

We would be better aligned with Martinborough Town Hall closer in population and town hall size. Martinborough Town Hall was strengthened and a new extension added which came in on time and on budget. The finished project looks great, celebrating the past and the future.

Masterton Town Hall facade is 600mm thick and is in good condition. With a new building incorporating earthquake strengthening which can take place to the interior of the facade, tying it in with the new building, it is considered a medium risk, not high.

In March the Government announced the Building Act is to be reviewed and amended for earthquake prone buildings and has extended the deadline for our town hall to 2030.

They will be reviewing rules and getting settings right. The new building act looks to create an efficient, competitive building regulatory system and reduce building costs.

The four year extension is about providing building owners with as much clarity and certainty as possible, proposing alternative methodologies to assess seismic risk in existing buildings, identifying financial barriers and suggesting incentives and support mechanisms to address the challenges.

They advise that technical solutions have advanced a lot in 10 years, lessons we can learn.

Many in the community feel let down by the vote in the 2024 Long Term Plan for the Town Hall, we have been fighting for many years. The decision made to demolish the whole Town Hall including facade and build a new Town Hall with a budget of no more than \$25 million was not one of the 3 options in the long term plan submissions and so no feedback was obtained prior to this decision, it appears to be a hastily delivered motion to get the 10 year plan signed off.

The Long Term plan was signed off in June 2024, no indication has been given by the council that a Town Hall can be built within their budget of \$25 million. In fact both the Mayor and deputy mayor have both advised that there is no guarantee that a Town Hall will be built if it costs more than \$25 million.

Option1 to build a new Town Hall has been priced at nearly \$40 million including GST, so based on that figure it is unlikely a new Town Hall will be built, but council has yet to advise the community.

The motion was moved to demolish the facade and build a new Town Hall for no more than \$25 million, stating "retaining the facade at a cost of \$2 million as per the consulted option does not make financial sense".

\$2 million for a \$40 million project is a small proportion of the cost.

Looking at figures for the other 2 building projects which were approved at the same time, Waiata house extension of 830 square metres at \$8.7 million. The library at 440 square metres and a budget of \$10.75 million. Both these non-heritage buildings did not have their budgets changed or reduced at the vote for the long term plan.

There is an opportunity to reassess these budgets so the Town Hall budget could be adjusted to retain our heritage.

To put the cost of the facade into perspective the council has allocated \$400 million to roading, \$286m to water infrastructure over the next 10 years. \$2 million for the facade seems a very small amount in comparison.

There was no discussion on grants or fundraising towards saving a heritage building, instead there is a council ~~led~~ ^{supported} group raising funds for the interior fit-out of Waiata house.

I don't believe the council or councillors have investigated every avenue towards retaining our history.

The submission made by Russell Hooper on behalf of the council states that the council can demonstrate that the resource consent can be granted because it is the only reasonable option that the council have, to deal with the building.

Option 1 from the figures supplied, does not meet the allocated budget of \$25 million and does not meet the District plan heritage policy in any way.

Option 2B to retain the facade is considered by Silverwood Architects report to be fit for purpose and retaining the facade which is the most significant feature goes some way towards meeting the proposed Wairarapa District plan heritage policy.

The council acknowledges the heritage value of the Town Hall however state that the costs of repairing the building are significant and given the building is no longer fit for purpose the costs to repair the building cannot be justified.

Again option 2B is \$3 million more than option 1 but not a significant sum over a project expected to cost \$40 million, and is fit for purpose.

The only option that fits within the budget of \$25 million allowed for the Town Hall is Option 3 to decommission and mothball the Town Hall and it meets the heritage policy.

I believe that the Resource consent to demolish the Town Hall should not be approved as the the council have not demonstrated that it is the only reasonable option, that the cost of \$3 million dollars to retain the facade is not significant given the overall cost of the project, that the community needs clarity as to whether a Town Hall will be built before the resource consent is decided, and that it would be prudent to await the outcome of the Building Act review before a decision is made regarding demolishing the building. a heritage building

Heritage New Zealand says demolition can sometimes be a short term convenient solution that is subsequently regretted.

We need to preserve the heritage, history and unique character of our Town hall for future generations.