

12th November 2023

Attn: Steve Rice.

Dear Steve,

Re: Built Heritage Assessment Methodology

Thank you for the opportunity to participate at the hearing on 7th November 2023. As requested by the Chair of the panel here is a copy of the points I raised in my presentation.

I want to clarify that the following comments are not specific to any particular property but are a general response.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize my support for the preservation of our city's architectural, cultural, and archaeological heritage. Nevertheless, when reviewing the assessment methodology, it is crucial to consider numerous aspects and nuances, including those that may fall outside the assessment criteria outlined in Mr. Richard Knott's supplementary evidence, dated September 22, 2023, specifically as detailed in clause 18.

- (a) means those natural and physical resources that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand's history and cultures, deriving from any of the following qualities:
 - (i) archaeological:
 - (ii) architectural:
 - (iii) cultural:
 - (iv) historic:
 - (v) scientific:
 - (vi) technological; and
- (b) includes—
 - (i) historic sites, structures, places, and areas; and
 - (ii) archaeological sites; and
 - (iii) sites of significance to Māori, including wāhi tapu; and
 - (iv) surroundings associated with the natural and physical resources

This assessment criteria, in my view, does not adequately account for the:

- Finer nuances of earthquake risks
- Financial burden thrust upon homeowners
- Wellbeing of some Hamiltonians impacted by Built Heritage status

1. Earthquake risks

While the documents acknowledge earthquake risk concerning the strengthening of buildings, there is a noticeable absence of consideration for building substrates with inherent earthquake risk. Specifically, older homes, aged between 80 to 100 years, constructed with steep terracotta roofs pose a significant hazard due to the potential for falling tiles during and after an earthquake. To address this concern, these buildings require re-roofing with alternative substrates, such as color steel. Notably, the government is actively replacing terracotta roofs on older structures like schools to minimize earthquake risks (refer to Appendix 1).

Professor David Lowe of Waikato University, along with his research team, has identified significant fault lines throughout Hamilton city and its surroundings. Although our region may be at a lower risk compared to others, the potential for seismic activity remains.

If the replacement of older substrates with newer materials is deemed necessary for reducing earthquake risk, it raises the question of how this change impacts the overall architectural and Built Heritage status of a home. This aspect requires careful consideration, as a key element like a terracotta roof would no longer serve as a distinctive heritage feature of a property.

2. Financial burden on homeowners

The Built Heritage designation appears to lack sufficient consideration for the financial burden it may impose on certain homeowners. This concern is particularly evident in the Hearing Session 2 report of October 27, 2023, which acknowledges additional financial responsibilities for landowners with structures listed as Built Heritage items.

The report emphasizes Council's commitment not to create a financial burden on ratepayers, explicitly referring to ratepayers whose homes are not designated as Built Heritage. However, homeowners with such designations seem to be excluded from this statement, posing questions of equity.

The suggestion that elected members should handle this matter might be seen as a strategic move rather than a genuine solution, potentially shifting the responsibility without addressing the underlying financial challenges homeowners may face.

Despite recent reductions in Council's Heritage fund from \$100,000 to \$80,000 per annum, the financial contribution from each household in Hamilton remains minimal, averaging \$1.42 per year or 12 cents per month. Over the last three Heritage funding periods, only a fraction of the funds has been allocated to homeowners, with a notable disparity compared to community buildings.

Considering the anticipated 150% increase in Built Heritage homes under PC9, it is expected that funds from the Heritage fund will be further strained. Homeowners seeking financial support may encounter limited options, as the reduction in funding signals Council's priorities elsewhere.

Council's financial constraints, evident in its substantial debt forecast, reflect the challenges both parties face. Homeowners required to invest significant amounts in maintaining their homes might be grappling with financial constraints as well. A realistic and equitable approach is necessary, considering the capacity of both Council and homeowners to meet the financial burden of maintaining heritage properties.

In light of the current cost of living crisis and significant mortgage interest rate increases, a compassionate and strategic approach is vital. Council must avoid a cavalier stance that neglects the well-being of homeowners, potentially leading to financial ruin and adversely affecting the mental health of ratepayers. A comprehensive assessment approach should factor in required maintenance costs, ensuring that homes deemed financially unviable are responsibly removed from the schedule to prevent dereliction and preserve the city's aesthetics.

3. Wellbeing of Hamiltonians

Several statements on the Council's website emphasize the commitment to ensuring the well-being of Hamiltonians. This commitment is prominently featured in the Council's Housing Strategy,

underscoring the significance of PC9 being evaluated through the strategic lens of well-being. Given that well-being is a pivotal element of the city's strategic focus, aligning PC9 with this perspective is both reasonable and essential. Notably, the second housing goal, out of four, specifically targets the well-being of Hamiltonians, highlighting its paramount importance in the city's overarching strategy.

Housing strategy

The statements below are sourced from the Hamilton City Council website – Housing Strategy.

The housing continuum and being 'well-housed'.

The strategy sets a vision for every person in Hamilton Kirikiriroa to be 'well-housed'. This is the idea of all Hamiltonians being able to live in a safe, warm, dry, affordable home that meets their diverse needs.

This aligns with the United Nations Right to Adequate Housing. This right included a framework of seven principles that are used to determine whether people are 'well-housed':

1. Affordable
2. Accessible.....

The first of the principles listed in "affordable", meaning not only the cost to purchase a home, but the cost to continue to live in one's home. The Built Heritage assessment criteria does not appear to adequately account for the burden of cost to maintain heritage homes. Yet, this is a key aspect of the Housing Strategy and aligns with the United Nations Human Right to Adequate Housing.

*The Housing strategy sets out four goals. The second of these four is:
"Our homes are good quality and protect the health and wellbeing of our people."*

Hamilton City Council website

Detailed in the Housing Strategy document are "Our principles". These are:

- *"People first – housing as a human right.*
- *Leadership through partnership and advocacy.*
- *A collective impact approach.*
- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi.*
- *Evidence-based decisions.*
- *Targeted, measurable goals.*
- *Getting the job done – mahi te mahi."*

Hamilton City Council website

Again, the assessment criteria listed in Mr Richard Knott's Supplementary evidence dated 22nd September 2023, in my view does not adequately take a "People first" approach in the assessment criteria, this is particularly important in regards to the financial impact Built Heritage may have on some homeowners.

4. Recommendations

- a. Earthquake risk:

Older homes featuring steep terracotta roofs should be excluded from the Built Heritage schedule due to significant health and safety concerns, specifically the risk of falling tiles during and after an earthquake event.

b. Financial impact:

Establish a fair and equitable maintenance threshold assessment to prevent certain ratepayers from shouldering excessive financial burdens. If anticipated maintenance costs surpass the established threshold, consider removing these homes from the Built Heritage schedule. This ensures that financial costs are distributed more fairly and equitably among ratepayers.

c. Wellbeing

Integrate a comprehensive well-being assessment into the existing criteria to evaluate the outcomes for both homeowners and the city as a whole. This assessment should be carefully balanced and incorporate considerations of financial impact, as mentioned in point 4.b.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Ray Pickett

Mobile: 021 942 694

Appendix 1


RE: Re- roofing quote for 13 Hammond St




Geoff Pickford <geoff@gaproofing.co.nz>

To: Ray Pickett

Cc: Carl Kennard

 Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

 Reply  Reply All  Forward 

Wed 6/09/2023 9:58 AM

Hi Ray

Yes they do, they become in a way quite brittle, very awkward to walk over and maintain if needed with out breaking, All schools and government buildings over the last 15 years and continually now are having all tiles removed due to the earth quake issues with them.

Thanks, have a good day.

Regards

Geoff Pickford

Director

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