

5th October 2005

Re: 69 Northland Rd, Northland, Wellington

Service Request No: 93037

This submission is from the Wellington Architectural Centre, a group which represents both professional and non-professionals interested in architecture and design, and in the promotion of good design in Wellington.

Members of the Architectural Centre who are associated with the design of the proposal, or who are associated with firms involved in the design (and hence may be seen to have a conflict of interest), have had no input into the writing of this submission.

Opposition for the Proposal

A key principal for the Wellington Architectural Centre in commenting on such proposals is whether or not the proposal provides a better architecture than the current situation. We do not believe that the proposal provides better architecture than the existing.

The issues at stake appear to be that the proposal will require the removal (and destruction) of a Category 2 listed building. The heritage building (Ward Memorial Church Hall, 1904) is a modest structure of small scale. Its architectural significance is as historic fabric, and as an example of a fast disappearing scale and type of architecture. In addition the building contributes positively to its surrounding townscape.

The proposed replacement is not dissimilar in architectural form and scale. In fact it seems to the Architectural Centre, that given the heritage significance of the structure proposed to be demolished, that an equally valid architectural proposal (from a users' perspective) could be achieved by alterations and additions to the existing heritage fabric. It appears that this would address user needs for increased space and for upgraded facilities to meet health and safety requirements.

The documentation suggests (using costings from a 1997 McKee Fehl proposal to alter the hall) that the cost of alteration and deferred maintenance of the church is more than the cost of constructing a new building. It is not clear whether the costs of demolition and the savings from a lack of maintenance in recent years have been taken into account. Given that no amount of money can replace historic fabric this argument seems insignificant.

The argument that trying to "adapt" the hall building architecturally will further add to the already incoherent design between the church and the existing hall" is invalid. We believe that a good architect will be able to alter the hall and provide an aesthetically appropriate design for the setting.

Conclusion

We oppose the demolition of the Northland church hall, and believe a better architectural proposal can be found which meets both the needs of the church users and the heritage community.

Yours sincerely

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