

3 March 2006



the architectural centre inc.
PO Box 24178 Wellington

Re: Draft Policy for Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings

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.

1) Support for the Proposal

The draft appears to be largely an administrative fulfilment of the council's legal obligations of the Building Act 2004. The Architectural Centre supports the draft and makes the following comments.

2) Minimum Notice Period

We consider that, in addition to the proposal that "In general, 10 days is considered a minimum notice period for the danger to be removed or the insanitary conditions to be fixed," consideration should be given to the council's ability to deem that a building be unoccupied until the danger/insanitary condition is addressed, or that a longer period is allowed to address the danger/insanitary condition if the building is to be unoccupied.

3) Heritage Buildings

a) Definition of a Heritage building

The Architectural Centre considers that a category wider than only those buildings listed under the Historic Places Act needs to be in place to protect all of the historic buildings in Wellington, because the inadequate resources given to fund registrations and mean that many buildings which merit recognition of their heritage value are not yet listed or registered.

All buildings with heritage listing and NZHPT registrations should be considered as historic buildings. We also consider that buildings which are not listed or registered, but for which documentation and expert advice validating an historic listing or registering is able to be made available, should be considered in the category of historic building. Likewise, buildings which have been identified as worthy of evaluation for District Plan heritage listing, or for NZHPT registration, should be given a category of interim heritage building, and considered as historic buildings until a full evaluation is carried out.

b) Requirement for Resource Consent

The Architectural Centre supports the proposal that heritage buildings cannot be demolished without resource consent, and the requirement that any notice regarding a building listed under the Historic Places Act 1993 be copied to the Historic Places Trust.

4) Common Processes across Wellington Councils

We endorse the proposal to have an assessment process common to all the councils in the greater Wellington region

5) Inspection Checklist

The Centre considers that the list of things the building inspection is to determine should be limited to aspects relevant to the potential danger. Given this whether building work is legal or illegal is not relevant. Rather the inspection should focus only on aspects of the building which are dangerous or insanitary regardless of legality.

6) Miscellaneous

There is a typographic error in "6. General Application, 3. Act". The phrase in the first sentence "the building owner or his agent" should be "the building owner or his or her agent".

8) Conclusion

The draft raises a number of issues as outlined above. On balance, the Architectural Centre supports the proposal.

Yours sincerely

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The Architectural Centre