

## Bluff Oyster and Food Festival Trustees Comments

The Bluff Oyster and Food Festival Charitable Trust (BOFFCT) feel it is necessary to demolish the Club Hotel, 100-116 Gore Street, Bluff. We initially purchased the property so as to utilise the land behind the building for the site of the annual Bluff Oyster and Food Festival. When the property was purchased, the building was not listed with NZ Historic Places Trust (now Heritage NZ). It was listed on the Invercargill City Council's District Plan. The property has since been listed as a Category Two property with HNZ. We did not agree to, or support, this decision.

We, as a volunteer-run organisation, do not have the resources, or need, to retain the building and have endeavoured to sell the property. It has been listed on Trade Me for more than a month, it has been advertised for several weeks in the Southland Express, and it was promoted on the HNZ website for approximately one month. We were only contacted by one person. They looked through the property and made no other contact.

The Trustees obtained an earthquake report on the property in October 2013. Coles Consulting assessed the property at 14% NBS. Graeme McMillan of GM Designs provided his engineering assessment of the property and found it to be unable to be saved. He felt it would be cheaper, and more viable, to demolish the entire property and rebuild a replica in its place. Given the Festival Trust have no use for the property, this is not practical for us nor would our Trust Deed permit the expenditure.

The BOFFCT engaged NZ Heritage Properties Ltd to complete a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). The report highlighted that 'The Club' was, in effect, four separate buildings that have been treated as one property. We provided access to HNZ's Consultant Engineer, Win Clark. Johnathon Howard of HNZ informed us that Mr Clark believed a porportion of the property could be saved. We considered the option of retaining Building One and/or Two (East end of property, adjoining Bluff Service Centre). Win Clark of HNZ gave a verbal assessment of \$600,000 to bring the two up to a minimum earthquake standard and assessed an amount of around \$2 million to bring them up to 66%. We were willing to support the retention of one, or both, but can not afford, nor justify, that amount of expenditure for what would only be storage space. Johnathon Howard of HNZ endeavoured to get funding to complete a feasibility study on this option. He was unsuccessful and, as such, indicated that HNZ would not oppose a full demolition of the property given no

solution could be found.

We have been advised by Bonisch Consultants and ICC that we are required to submit a costing of restoring the property along with the Resource Consent Application (RCA) to demolish the property. Win Clark of HNZ was unwilling to provide this on paper without us funding yet another report. We approached Southern Quantity Surveyors who informed us that the reports required to assess it would be in the tens of thousands. Preparing to submit the RCA has already cost over \$20,000 and the Trustees are unable, in good conscience, to commit more funds to this report as there is no perspective developer or purchaser requiring it. The Coles Consulting Report identified concerns around liquefaction on the site therefore future development may be limited or extremely costly. Win Clark of HNZ has been quoted as saying that UMB can cost anywhere between \$200 and \$5000 per sqm to repair. At \$2500 per sqm this would equate to \$3.2M for The Club Hotel.

We fully appreciate the Council's responsibilities to have sufficient information with the RCA and would like to offer the information, that we believe, in our layman's opinion, will fulfil your obligations to make an informed decision under the Resource Management Act.

It is our understanding that ICC are required to prepare an evaluation report;

*An evaluation report required under this Act must—*

*(1)*

*(a) examine the extent to which the objectives of the proposal being evaluated are the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of this Act; and*

*(b) examine whether the provisions in the proposal are the most appropriate way to achieve the objectives by—*

*(i) identifying other reasonably practicable options for achieving the objectives; and*

*(ii) assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions in achieving the objectives; and*

*(iii) summarising the reasons for deciding on the provisions; and*

*(c) contain a level of detail that corresponds to the scale and significance of the environmental, economic, social, and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the proposal.*

(2)

*An assessment under subsection (1)(b)(ii) must—*

*(a) identify and assess the benefits and costs of the environmental, economic, social, and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the provisions, including the opportunities for—*

*(i) economic growth that are anticipated to be provided or reduced; and*

*(ii) employment that are anticipated to be provided or reduced; and*

*(b) if practicable, quantify the benefits and costs referred to in paragraph (a); and*

*(c) assess the risk of acting or not acting if there is uncertain or insufficient information about the subject matter of the provisions.*

Given the restrictions imposed on us by our Trust Deed and the Trustee Act 1956, we feel that our explanation of why this proposal is the '*reasonably practicable option*' will assist you in fulfilling your evaluation report obligations.

The BOFFCT Trustees are guided by one defining phrase 'to provide amenities that benefit Bluff'.

While the venue we have created suits the needs of the Festival it also caters for Bluff in other ways. It provides a venue for undercover sports practice, Christmas in the Bluff, large funerals and gatherings, market space, Try-Whanau, etc. The Festival, itself, is a significant factor in our decision making process. The Festival's future is important for Bluff, Invercargill, and Southland, in general.

We feel we should outline the impact of this proposal on the Festival as it, undoubtedly, impacts Bluff as well. As per Section (2), we have identified the need to expand the Festival after three sell-out events. The one-day iconic event was assessed at providing over \$4M to the region many years ago and has done nothing but grow since. To allow for more attendees we require more space. the demolition of 'The Club' will provide space for approximately 1000 more people. At \$35 per ticket, this equates to \$35,000 In addition to the ticket price, each attendee spends over \$50 each on food and drink at the Festival. With the majority of our patrons coming from outside the region, this provides more money into our local economy. More people coming to what has become a 'bucket list' event also provides greater exposure to the region.

Expansion aside, the significant impact of the proposal not going ahead is of great concern to the BOFFCT. The Festival has one income source which currently

provides around \$70,000 per year profit. If 'The Club' remains, we, and Council, are obligated to ensure it is safe. We have already identified to Council our concerns over the instability of the parapet and with a 14% NBS rating it will require extensive work in the not so distant future. Not only will our income be insufficient to cover these costs but our Trustees could not justify it as an 'amenity for the benefit of Bluff'. If the building remains standing, and is unsafe, we are unsure of whether we can continue to invite 5,000+ people to gather in its shadow. This scenario puts the future of the event, and site, at risk. Given the proximity to a public footpath. State Highway 1, and the Council owned Bluff Service Centre, it seems unlikely that Council can, or will, take a 'do nothing' approach. Action needs to be taken on the property, sooner, rather than later. With no outside interest in the property it falls on us, to do something.