

**Before an Independent Hearing  
Commissioner**

**In the Matter**

**Of the Resource Management  
Act 1991**

**And**

**In the Matter**

**Of an application for resource  
consent for demolition of the  
Masterton Town Hall**

**By**

**Masterton District Council  
Applicant**

---

**Statement of Evidence of Stephen Geuze**

**Dated: 28 March 2025**

---

**HAZELTON** | LAW

Solicitor Acting: Rachel Conner  
Rachel.conner@hazelton.co.nz  
Direct dial: 04 4727576

Level 29 Plimmer Towers  
2-6 Gilmer Terrace  
PO Box 5639  
Wellington 6145  
+64 4 472 7570

CONSTRUCTION | INSURANCE | RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

hazelton.co.nz  
statement of stephen geuze

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Qualifications and Experience**

1. My name is Stephen Geuze, I am a Registered Architect and a Director and Shareholder of Silverwood Architects Limited, an architectural firm based in Masterton.
2. I hold a Master of Architecture (Prof) (2010) and a Bachelor of Applied Science (2008) from Victoria University.
3. Prior to my time at Silverwood Architects, I carried out work as an architectural draughtsperson, structural engineer's draughtsperson, and an architectural graduate with Vorstermans Architects Limited, where I was employed between December 2010 and May 2015. In July 2015, I became a registered architect and have been in this role for nearly 10 years now.
4. In 2020 I lead the design of a new office facility for Greater Wellington Regional Council in Masterton. This building had an occupancy of approximately 90 permanent staff plus meeting spaces include council chambers and public meeting rooms. This project provided me with a good understanding of the needs of local government organisations.

### **Code of Conduct**

5. I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note. I agree to comply with this Code. The evidence in my statement is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

### **Involvement in this matter**

6. In 2019, Silverwood Architects was engaged by Masterton District Council (MDC) to prepare an Indicative Commercial Office Fit-out Design for the existing Municipal Building and Civil Defence Building.
7. Following this, in December 2023, MDC engaged Silverwood Architects to prepare a series of Bulk & Massing Studies for the provision of a Town Hall, Civil Defence facility and Office Space to accommodate the entire Council organisation.
8. Finally, in September 2024, MDC asked Silverwood Architects to prepare the Fit for Purpose Assessment of the existing Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Buildings.

9. I prepared the Fit For Purpose Assessment for the Council dated 12 November 2024, which I am aware forms part of the current resource consent application for demolition of the town hall buildings.
10. In preparing this statement I have reviewed my assessment report and stand by its findings. I am not aware of any new or additional matters arising since the report was prepared that need to be addressed or updated.
11. I have also relied on the following reports:
  - (a) Masterton District Council Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 MDC 2024
  - (b) 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan Supporting Information - Town Hall, Library and Archive (Draft) MDC 2024
  - (c) Masterton District Council Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 Consultation Document MDC April 2024
  - (d) Bulk and Massing Studies - Masterton Town Hall Site Silverwood Architects 1 December 2024
  - (e) Demolition Report (Demo of Town Hall and Retention of Municipal Buildings) LGE Consulting 24 November 2023
  - (f) Structural Sketches SK1-SK9 LGE Consulting 23 November 2023
  - (g) Masterton Whakaoriori Civic Facility Draft Return Brief - Revision A ARM Architecture, Charcoal Blue and Architectus 2022
  - (h) Masterton Civic Centre Project - Stage 1: Market Demand and Financial Analysis Horwath HTL 12 April 2019
  - (i) Asbestos Demolition Survey and Lead Paint Sampling Report FibresafeNZ 17 May 2019
  - (j) Indicative Commercial Office Fit-Out Design - Municipal Building and Civil Defence Building Silverwood Architects 2019
  - (k) Appendix A 1223 Structural LGE Consulting 20 September 2016
  - (l) Appendix B 1223 Structural LGE Consulting 20 September 2016
  - (m) LGE Structural Report Town Hall & Municipal Building - Revision A LGE 27 September 2019

### **Summary of findings/conclusions**

12. I am aware that MDC has considered for options when assessing possible outcomes for both the Town Hall and Municipal Building:

- (a) Option 1 - Full demolition of Town Hall and Municipal Building (and Civil Defence Building)
  - (b) Option 2 - Partial demolition:
    - (i) Option 2a - Retention of municipal building and demolition of the Town Hall
    - (ii) Option 2b - Retention of the municipal building façade only.
  - (c) Option 3 - Decommissioning and mothballing the Town Hall and Municipal Building
  - (d) Option 4 - Retention and strengthening the Town Hall and Municipal Building for active use, with the buildings strengthened to either 80% NBS or 34% NBS.
13. The Fit For Purpose assessment seeks to understand and evaluate the potential outcomes and impact of each of the full and partial retention and strengthening options considered by MDC for the Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Building.
14. This assessment assumes that the existing Civil Defence Building located at the northeastern end of the Municipal Building would be demolished under all options for consideration. I understand that consent is still required to demolish the existing Civil Defence building but that it has no notable heritage value and it is not considered cost effective to strengthen and refurbish.
15. I also note that the Town Hall's suitability as a multi-purpose performance venue was addressed in a previous report, and was not reconsidered as part of this assessment.
16. I note that the Fit For Purpose assessment does not include any evaluation of Option 1 (full demolition) and Option 3 (mothballing) as these options fall outside of the purpose of this report, being to assess potential built outcomes of each of the full and partial retention and strengthening options.
17. In relation to Option 3, I am aware that the buildings are subject to an Earthquake Prone Building Notice and are therefore required to be either strengthened or demolished within the statutory timeframe. In my view, this means that Option 3 is only a short to medium term option for treatment of the buildings and that either of Options 1, 2 or 4 will be required in due course.
18. A detailed assessment of the four options is included in the Fit For Purpose Assessment. The conclusion reached is that only Options 1 (Full demolition) and 2b (Retention of the municipal building façade only)

can be considered Fit For Purpose options for the redevelopment of the Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Buildings.

### *Option 1*

19. While an assessment of Option 1 was excluded from the report, it should be noted that this option provides the opportunity to develop entirely new town hall, Council offices and Civil Defence facility without any of the compromises identified within the retention and strengthening options.
20. Further to this, Option 1 has the lowest potential for unforeseen cost escalation as it eliminates the inherent risk associated with preserving existing building structure.
21. By way of relevant context, I am aware that MDC is currently progressing design solutions to extend Waiata House to provide for the Civil Defence facility and increase the capacity of Waiata House to accommodate the entire organisation's office-based staff, including those currently based in a rented facility on Queen Street. I understand that this is planned to be constructed in 2026.
22. Assuming MDC complete the Waiata House extension, Option 1 provides MDC with the opportunity to design a new stand-alone Town Hall facility which is carefully tailored to meet the community's needs, delivered within the financial funding which may be available and can make best use of the site to complement its urban surroundings.

### *Option 2*

23. The assessment of Option 2a for the Retention of the Municipal Façade identified poor Fit for Purpose outcomes against the three categories assessed (Spatial Planning, Building Fabric and Environment & Site Planning).
24. While it can therefore be concluded that Option 2b provides a Fit for Purpose solution, it should be noted that Option 2b is not the optimal solution as concerns and limitations to this option have been identified in the assessment.
25. In particular, while the extent of work required to strengthen and refurbish the Municipal Building façade by comparison with Option 2a is considerably less, there remains an element of risk associated with unforeseen construction issues associated with retaining the municipal building façade. An outdoor town square performance space cannot be achieved under Option 2b because retaining the Municipal Building façade limits the Town Hall's ability to connect with the Town Square.

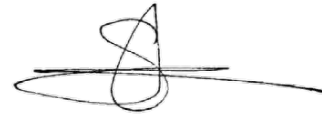
#### *Option 4*

26. The assessment of Options 4a and 4b identified poor Fit for Purpose outcomes against all three categories.
27. In addition, there remains considerable uncertainty as to whether the the buildings can be structurally strengthened to a level sufficient to be used as a performance venue in a similar capacity to that of its historic use. Any of change of use for the building/s would be subject to the requirements of sections 114 and 115 of the Building Act and is likely to require further work to ensure compliance with the Building Code to the necessary standard.

#### **Conclusion**

28. In my view, only Options 1 and 2b can reasonably be considered Fit for Purpose options for the redevelopment of the Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Building.
29. In particular, Option 1 will provide MDC with the best pathway to developing purpose built facilities to serve the Masterton community and their own organisation's needs.

Dated this 28th day of March 2025



---

Stephen Geuze  
Architect