

BEFORE THE MASTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991
AND an application for resource consent for the demolition of the
Masterton Town Hall located at 64 Chapel Street, Masterton
Application Number: RM240135
APPLICANT Masterton District Council

**MINUTE #4 OF INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONER
DATED 31 MARCH 2025**

1. I have today received the Memorandum of Counsel for Masterton District Council dated 28 March 2025 confirming that expert evidence from Russell Hooper (Planning), Stephen Geuse (Architectural) and Alistair Cattanach (Structural Engineering) was filed on 28 March 2025, as set out in Minute #1.
2. Counsel advised that one further statement of expert evidence by Mr Daniel Butterick would be lodged today (31 March 2025) and requested that I agree to the late filing, which I do on the grounds that in my opinion no party will be disadvantaged.
3. Counsel also advised that the Applicant would not be calling evidence on Historic Heritage at the hearing and explains the reasons why this is the case, commenting that:

The Applicant accepts the conclusions reached by WSP within the HEA report regarding the historic heritage value of the Town Hall buildings and does not seek to challenge those findings”.
4. I note that the conclusions reached by WSP within the HEA report were, inter alia, that:

“Overall, the Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Buildings have high heritage significance, primarily due to their architectural, historic, social and contextual values”.
5. Counsel notes that Mr Richard Knott in a peer review of the WSP Report circulated as an appendix to the section 42A report reached conclusions that are largely consistent with WSP’s conclusions.
6. In the circumstances, I do not consider it necessary to have a WSP witness attend the hearing or have Ms Chessa Stevens respond to any written questions, other than I request that Ms Stevens confirms that the conclusions reached in the WSP report prepared by Alex Vakhrousheva dated 28/11/2024 represent her expert opinion.
7. Given that both WSP and Mr Knott are of the opinion that the Masterton Town Hall has significant historic heritage value, I can foreshadow that at the hearing a particular line of enquiry I will explore with both planning witnesses, Ms Carter and Mr Hooper, are the grounds that lead them to conclude that demolition can proceed as a Discretionary Activity under Proposed WCDP Rule HH-R7, notwithstanding the historic heritage significance of the building(s).

8. Finally, I acknowledge that Counsel will be calling two witnesses to present evidence of fact. I confirm that, if necessary, this can be tabled on the day of the hearing, as is the case with other non-expert evidence.

Correspondence

9. Any correspondence relating to this Minute should be directed to Sheryn Scanlan, Planning Technical Support Officer at planningadmin@mstn.govt.nz and I will endeavour to respond as soon as I can.



Alistair Aburn
Independent Hearing Commissioner

31 March 2025