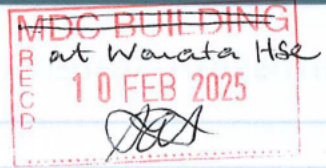


SUBMISSION ON A NOTIFIED RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION

FORM 13 - Pursuant to Sections 95A, 95B, 95C, 96, 127(3), 137(5)(c) and 234(4) of the Resource Management Act 1991



Submitter



Name HEWITT HARRISON

Contact Person (if different from above)

Postal Address

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Email

Details of the Proposal to which this Submission Relates

Name of Applicant MASTERTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Address of Proposal 64 CHAPEL STREET MASTERTON

Application No. RM 240135

Description of Proposal DEMOLITION OF EXISTING TOWN HALL
AND MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

Details of Submission

My submission:

- Supports the whole proposal
- Supports part of the proposal
- Opposes the whole proposal
- Opposes part of the proposal

In the event this application is subject to a Resource Consent Hearing. Do you wish to be heard in respect of your submission?

Yes No

If others make a similar submission I will consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing

SUBMISSION ON A NOTIFIED RESOURCE
CONSENT APPLICATION

FORM 13 - Pursuant to Sections 95A, 95B, 95C, 96,
127(3), 137(5)(c) and 234(4) of the Resource Management Act 1991

Submission Statement

The specific parts of the Proposal that this submission relates to.

REWER BUSHCUTS

Decision you want the Council to make:

Grant the Consent Decline the Consent Grant the Consent with Conditions

REWER BUSHCUTS

Signature

To be signed by the submitter or person authorised to sign on behalf of the submitter.



Name G. H. HARRISON

Date 10 FEBRUARY 2025

Important notes for the Submitter

1. In accordance with the Privacy Act 1993, submissions will be made available for viewing by Council and members of the public.
2. This form is for your convenience only. You may make a submission that addresses the points above in a letter or other suitable format.
3. Submissions will not be returned, so please keep a copy.
4. A copy of your submission must be sent to both Council and to the applicant.

SUBMISSION ON NOTIFIED RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION – FORM 13

Submitter : Hewitt Harrison

SUBMISSION STATEMENT

In the context of this Resource Consent Application as lodged I have to register my opposition to the wholesale demolition of all three buildings that comprise the definition of "Town Hall" – being the Town Hall building itself, the Municipal Building and the Civil Defence building. However, my opposition is qualified. And I ask those determining the outcome of this Application to genuinely consider the consequences of granting the Application in its current composition.

- a. While I am in favour of demolition of the independent Town Hall building structure, I oppose the demolition of the Municipal Building and the Civil Defence building. The Civil Defence building meets the current earthquake requirements, or it used to a year or three ago, and may continue to serve its purpose as the district's civil defence operational headquarters – with perhaps some improvements. I accept that the Municipal building (previously the MDC offices) needs to be strengthened to meet earthquake building regulations – but unless the cost has doubled in the past two or so years then I would question the economics demanding that it be demolished. With some strengthening and some refurbishment/modernisation it could be re-developed to suit a variety of purposes including returning to being MDC offices. But that option appears to have been thrown out the window with the proverbial bathwater by MDC.
- b. On Page 4 of the application it is stated (with my comments inserted in red) –

"The purpose of the application is to demonstrate that demolition of the earthquake prone Masterton Town Hall, Municipal Building, and Civil Defence Building (to be followed by construction of a replacement at a later date) can be granted because it is the only reasonable option that the Masterton District Council (applicant) has to deal with the building. It is extraordinarily misleading, even perhaps untrue, to suggest that this is the only reasonable option

The applicant acknowledges the heritage value of the building and its contribution to the streetscape and community. However, the costs of repairing the building are significant and given that the building is no longer fit for purpose, the costs to repair the building cannot be justified. There are three buildings referred to in the 1st para – the Town Hall building does need to be demolished (and it has no Heritage value) – the Municipal building has ALL the Heritage value and can be strengthened and refurbished – the Civil Defence building can be retained and re-purposed, and it complements the Municipal Building

The demolition of the existing building is regrettable but does represent a step towards a modern, fit for purpose, civic building which will better serve and connect with the community. Suggesting that the demolition of these three buildings "is regrettable" is an insult to the intelligence of the community when it is realised that through the demolition a major element of what little is left of Heritage value buildings in Masterton will disappear. Buildings are a snapshot in time - reflecting architectural evolution. Just as the Masterton Town Hall was previously rebuilt and served the community for over 100 years, a new civic building will leave its own mark on Masterton's streetscape and history." Would you regard the Notre Dame Cathedral of Paris as a snapshot in time, or closer to home – the Hastings Municipal Buildings and their Opera House (now Toi Toi) a "snapshot in time". Why can MDC

not see that our Municipal Building has a comparable Heritage value albeit perhaps at a different level – but certainly comparable in the overall context of the Masterton district and its history and “architectural evolution”.

- c. Of considerable concern to myself (and many others in the MDC catchment) is that the demolition of the Municipal Building as is seemingly proposed by this Resource Consent Application will remove a Heritage listed building from the Masterton landscape – and dare I suggest, probably the most significant and most important publicly recognised Heritage building that exists in Masterton. It simply beggars belief that MDC is forging ahead with this proposal given the public support a few years back when the citizens of the town held a ‘Hands around the Hall’ demonstration (prior to the current Council). All of today’s councillors are aware of the public support that was demonstrated on that occasion (some of them were actually present and participated!!), and on other occasions when the Masterton Action Group was initiated to fight the profligate spending – up to \$70Million – proposed to build a new Civic Centre. One of the key drivers behind those demonstrations of support and solidity was the very public emotion expressed in support of the façade of the Municipal Building. This support for retention of the façade remains today – here and now in 2025.
- d. In e the Executive Summary of the Application it is stated –
“The applicant acknowledges the heritage value of the building and its contribution to the streetscape and community.”
And goes on to say –
“Buildings are a snapshot in time - reflecting architectural evolution.”
And then -
“The applicant acknowledges that the Masterton Town Hall is a prominent building in a high profile location.”
And, then on Page 7 of your application we find this summary -
“Overall, The Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Buildings have high heritage significance , primarily due to their architectural, historic, social, and contextual values. The buildings demonstrate high architectural and aesthetic value for their Stripped Classical style, incorporated during the 1949-1954 works to refurbish the building after sustaining extensive earthquake damage in the 1942 Wairarapa earthquake. Of particular note are the southeast and southwest elevations, joined by an elegant sweeping arc, with symmetrical composition and restrained decorate features including rosettes embedded within window spandrels and capped pilasters. Comparative analysis found that there were very few, if any, other examples of Town Halls or Municipal Buildings designed in a similar style which gives the Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Buildings high rarity value. The Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Buildings have moderate to high contextual significance due to their landmark status and location on a key site within the township, as well as being one of the few remaining large-scale historic buildings within Masterton. The place is held in high regard by the public; it is a well-known civic building which is seen as an iconic structure that represents the history of Masterton and a tangible element of community identity. The importance of the place to the local community was demonstrated in 2021 when more than 1000 protestors turned out to take part in the ‘Hands Around the Hall’ demonstration, which advocated against the demolition of the Town Hall and Municipal buildings which was proposed in the Masterton Long Term Plan. The Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Buildings have high historical significance as an early 20th century civic building and demonstrate an important historic pattern in the erection and replacement of such buildings as local populations develop over

time. The buildings have moderate scientific and archaeological significance for their proximity to recorded archaeological site of the 1878 town hall, and moderate technological significance for their use of construction materials and methodologies which reflect changing attitudes towards seismic resilience in the mid-20th century."

For reference – see Appendix B of the application - **Heritage Effects Assessment prepared by WSP**. I say to you – how can you support the demolition of the Municipal building if it means that the façade will be reduced to a pile of rubble. You surely can not.

- e. Yet, despite all of the above the application carries on to justify demolition of these three buildings – reducing the site to a flat car park sized space – in the middle of a precinct of comprising a Town Square and two quite remarkable buildings that will be left standing in splendid isolation.
- f. So, we come to the topic of the retention of the façade of the Municipal Building - on Page 10 of the application the final entry under the heading "**Recent History**" reads –

*"April 2024 - LTP again sought engagement on the Town Hall. Options were to demolish the Town Hall and Municipal Buildings and not replace them; demolish the Town Hall and Municipal Buildings and build a new Town Hall on the current Town Hall site, **including retaining the Municipal Building façade (this was the Council's preferred option)**; demolish the Town Hall and build a new Town Hall and refurbishing the Municipal Buildings **including façade.**" (The highlighting and under-lining is the writer's.)*

I respectfully suggest that the MDC are shooting themselves and the community in the foot...

- g. My submission is that MDC are ignoring both their own thinking and the desire of the community to retain at least some semblance of the Heritage nature of these buildings. They are ignoring the future generations of citizens of the district who, through complete removal of the Municipal Building, will never get to see or experience a significant aspect of the historical visual nature of the town with the façade gone, let alone the building itself.
- h. It is possible that MDC are over-reacting to the potential costs associated with the retention of the façade of the Municipal Building (and probably misunderstanding the possible community reaction). Prior to election of this current Council the Masterton Action Group were provided with broad costings related to many aspects of the previous Council's grandiose scheme to establish a new Civic Centre on a different site. To retain the façade of the Municipal Building MAG was provided with an estimate of \$1.2M to \$1.5M. Today MDC are suggesting a cost of \$3.6M. I am unsure what elements of demolition costs have risen so much in the past two or so years that would result in a 100% increase in the cost.
- i. Whether the cost is \$1.5M or \$3m I suggest that this is a reasonable cost to pay to ensure that Masterton retains, at the very minimum, the façade of the Municipal Building. I venture to suggest that a fundraising committee or Trust could most probably raise these funds through charitable and family Trusts who have an empathy with retaining heritage assets in our towns and cities, and then there are those of a philanthropic nature who would also contribute – even, perhaps, the fundraising committee that MDC has set up to access

funding for their Town Hall project could have this included in their objectives. It is not a material sum that has to be found.

- j. The question has to be asked – exactly what value do you place on retaining a major element of Masterton’s sole remaining Heritage to ensure that future generations can enjoy some history of the town in a physical sense rather than be sent to the local archive to view a ‘snapshot’?

- k. It is my view that this application has to be rejected until there is recognition of the value of the façade on the Municipal Building and either –
 - 1. This application can be approved subject to the façade of the Municipal Building being retained and incorporated into a new town hall building
 - OR
 - 2. This application is rejected and a new application prepared that specifically retains the façade of the Municipal Building for incorporation into a new town hall building