

SUBMISSION ON A NOTIFIED RESOURCE  
CONSENT APPLICATION

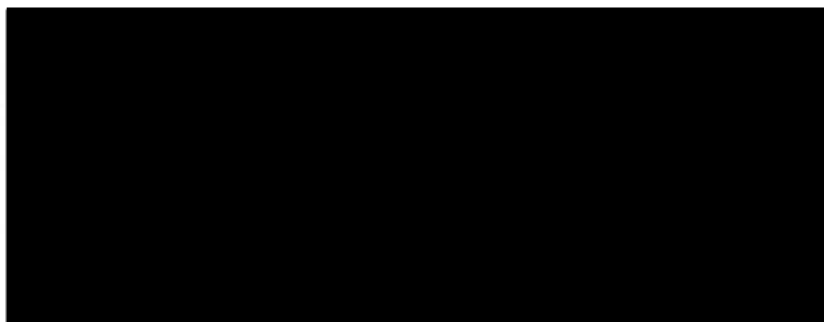
FORM 13 - Pursuant to Sections 95A, 95B, 95C, 96,  
127(3), 137(5)(c) and 234(4) of the Resource Management Act 1991



### Submitter

Name  
Contact Person  
(if different from above)  
Postal Address  
Home Phone  
Cell Phone  
Email

Robyn Prior



### Details of the Proposal to which this Submission Relates

Name of Applicant  
Address of Proposal  
Application No.  
Description of Proposal

Masterton District Council / Russell Hooper Consulting  
64 Chapel St, Masterton, 5810  
RM240135  
Resource Consent to Demolish the existing Town  
Hall & Municipal Building.

### Details of Submission

My submission:

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

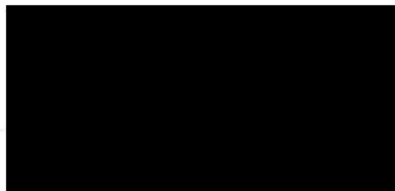
*Sue Attached*

**Decision you want the Council to make:**

- Grant the Consent     Decline the Consent     Grant the Consent with Conditions

**Signature**

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



Name *ROBYN PRIOR*  
Date *February 8, 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 Statement to accompany Notified Resource Consent Application #RM240135**

I have carefully read the Council's applicant statement and the email received from Bob Francis and David Borman. While I have only the utmost respect for these two men, neither their submission to me, nor the Council statement satisfy a number of questions I have about the Town Hall and the decision to first, abandon it in 2016 and second to demolish it eight years later.

I note that the council has softened its language around the status of the town hall and municipal building, now claiming it to be "earthquake prone" (and what building isn't in NZ?). It maybe that the original decision to abandon these buildings was a knee jerk decision, yet the time that has elapsed to reconsider this without any urgency has not seemed to bring about any clarity.

In those intervening years we have had a pandemic that has had huge financial consequences for the country, our community, and the rates we pay. Clearly, this is not the environment to be spending big money on demolition or rebuild, even with the promise of fundraising. We all know how with the best intentions in the world, this will balloon out. This project is not a must have, yet other projects in the town are: Water – availability and storage, sewerage, wastewater, roads, footpaths and the general well-being of our community.

In addition to the pandemic, the government has increased the timeline for earthquake condemned buildings to be strengthened or demolished for a further four years. There is no rush. The government signalled this well in advance but still the council has rushed headlong into this resource consent. Similarly, the government has said it will review the standards for these buildings, yet the Council refuses to wait until it has the full measure of what these will be.

Nowhere in any of these various submissions in support of demolition have I seen any discussion of the importance of heritage buildings in a townscape and the effect these have on our mental wellbeing and the attractiveness of our town. So many of our heritage buildings have been demolished and our town, particularly Queen St and Chapel Street, are littered with ugly "new buildings" with no architectural merit, where once beautiful heritage buildings sat. The town hall sits in a particularly attractive precinct of three heritage buildings – the old Public Trust Building, the Times Age building, and the town hall/municipal building itself. The fourth corner is the very ugly building that replaced an earlier one. Nearby is the old Masonic Lodge building and the lovey villa housing The Club on the corner of Chapel and Essex Streets. The council seems to have conveniently forgotten its own literature and their references to the heritage merits of the two buildings in this community where there is such a paucity.

Whilst various submissions promise to retrieve materials to incorporate into the new building and façade, this has had the effect of having people think a replica will be built, whilst in reality there will be no such effect. Once demolished that building and all it represents will be gone. Other confusions abound, including the actual costs of the demolition and rebuild, which gives little confidence to those of us following this debate.

One thing for sure is that the cost of retaining the status quo for now is absolutely the cheapest option. It doesn't give the staff the deluxe suite they wish for, and it means being spread over two sites, but that is the reality of straitened times and we most assuredly are in straitened times and they are likely to get worse given the instability of the world right now.

Interestingly, in the preceding eight years, this "highly dangerous building" has sat happily on its space. State Highway 2 between Lincoln Rd and Perry St has not been closed because of the "threat" the building poses. Until recently the food trucks and entertainers were allowed to enjoy the forecourt each Thursday evening (they only moved because they were told the town hall was about to be demolished –that information/scaremongering was a bit precipitous given the resource consent process had not been completed, but it demonstrates the manipulation of this narrative by the council). And council staff have been in and out of the building as it has been used for storage and there seemed to be no concern for their welfare during their various visits into the building. I have been told that mothballing the town hall for now would involve all sorts of expenses such as a fence around it and scaffolding or other support systems. Yet in the preceding eight years no-one thought this was necessary and none were installed. Is this yet more made-up items to strengthen the demolition argument?

In all, there appears no compelling reason to proceed with this consent at this time. It is precipitous and being rushed through, many have been unaware of it given the timing over the summer break and it flies in the face of urgent infrastructure works that will make a difference to the residents of Masterton. There are other facilities which can be used. The council say they have consulted with prospective users, yet the owners of the two largest dance companies in Masterton have had no contact from council and had serious doubts that it would be suitable for them, or affordable.

I totally oppose the awarding of the resource consent to demolish the Masterton Town Hall and Municipal Building.