

Before the Timaru District Council
Independent Hearing Commissioner

Under the Resource Management Act 1991
In the matter of an application for resource consent by Bayhill Developments Limited

Statement of evidence of Ian James Lochhead on behalf of Timaru Civic Trust

1 December 2016

Timaru Civic Trust's solicitors:

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Introduction

1 My name is Ian James Lochhead.

Qualifications and experience

2 I hold the degrees of BA, MA (1st class honours) and PhD in Art History. I was a member of academic staff at the University of Canterbury from 1981 until 2014 and was, for 15 years prior to retirement, Associate Professor of Art History.

3 My specialist fields of teaching and research are the history of New Zealand architecture and the history and theory of architectural heritage conservation.

4 I have pioneered the teaching of architectural history as an academic discipline in New Zealand and have carried out research and published extensively, both in New Zealand and internationally, on the subject of New Zealand architectural history.

5 In 2000 I was appointed as Laing Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA. I was made a Life Member of the Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand in 2013 for services to architectural history in New Zealand.

6 I have served as a member of the Canterbury Branch Committee of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust/Pouhere Taonga. I was a founding member of ICOMOS New Zealand and I have also been an ICOMOS Board member. I have been a member of the Christchurch City Council's Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings Advisory Committee and was a member of the Arts Centre of Christchurch's Site Committee from 1993 to 2006 and was a member of the Arts Centre of Christchurch Trust Board in 2008 and 2009.

7 I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. I have complied with it in preparing this evidence and I agree to comply with it in presenting evidence at this hearing. The evidence that I give is within my area of expertise except where I state that my evidence is given in reliance on another person's evidence. I have considered all material facts that are known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express in this evidence.

Scope of evidence

8 I have been asked by Timaru Civic Trust to prepare evidence in relation to the architecture of the Hydro Grand Hotel. This includes:

- (a) The significance of the architectural firm of Hall and Marchant within the context of New Zealand architecture as a whole;

- (b) The importance of the Hydro Grand hotel in the context of Timaru's architectural history, its role as a building of landmark significance within Timaru and its role as a representative of a building type that, since the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes, has become rare;
- (c) The significance of Timaru's architectural heritage within the context of Canterbury's architectural heritage as a whole, following the destruction of urban architectural heritage resulting from the Canterbury earthquakes;
- (d) The value of heritage conservation in preserving regional identity and stimulating economic growth; and
- (e) The ability of seismically strengthened heritage buildings to perform well in earthquakes.

The significance of the architectural firm of Hall and Marchant within the context of New Zealand architecture as a whole

- 9 Herbert Hall (1880-1939), the architect of the Hydro Grand Hotel, was a significant figure within the history of New Zealand architecture during the first three decades of the twentieth century. At a time when the practice of architecture in New Zealand was less concentrated in the main centres of population, Hall was one of a group of prominent Timaru architects, including Percy Watts Rule and Lusk and Moriarty, who gave Timaru its distinctive architectural character as a Edwardian town characterised by buildings of a scale and sophistication that belied the relatively small size of the City. Hall was born in Christchurch and attended Christchurch Boys High School and Canterbury University College. He completed his architectural training in Sydney, settling in Timaru on his return to New Zealand and establishing his practice there.
- 10 As architect to the Mount Cook Tourist Company, Hall's work was experienced by a national and international clientele. He was the architect of the second Hermitage Hotel at Mount Cook in 1913 and he was recognised for his work as a designer of hotels. His most important building for the company was the Chateau Tongariro, built in 1929 to serve visitors to Tongariro National Park. This was the largest Neo-Georgian building to be constructed in New Zealand and a design that was up-to-date and comparable to contemporaneous Neo-Georgian architecture in Britain and the United States. Hall's national standing was confirmed in 1934 when he was awarded the New Zealand Institute of Architect's highest honour, its Gold Medal, for his design of the St David's Memorial Church at Cave in South Canterbury.
- 11 The Hydro Grand Hotel is one of Hall's best known buildings and one of a group of buildings, including the Caroline Bay Kiosk, also designed by Hall, which contributed to Timaru's status as a leading New Zealand holiday destination

during the first half of the twentieth century. Situated on its prominent site overlooking Caroline bay, and located on what was formerly the main motor route into Timaru's central business district, the Hydro Grand Hotel was and still is, a landmark building within the City.

The importance of the Hydro Grand hotel in the context of Timaru's architectural history, its role as a building of landmark significance within Timaru and its role as a representative of a building type that, since the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes, has become rare

- 12 The Hydro Grand is an excellent example of Edwardian architecture and possesses many characteristic features of the period. It was completed in 1913 at a cost of £9,000, the contractor being Calvert of Christchurch. Using the Reserve Bank's online inflation calculator, the 1913 cost translates into a present day equivalent of \$2,818, 911.00.
- 13 The Hydro Grand was one of Timaru's premier hotels up until the 1960s after which it suffered a slow decline. Its most distinctive architectural element is the circular, domed corner tower at the junction of Sefton and Stafford Streets. This was a much-used device during this period to articulate the corners of buildings where street boundaries met at acute angles. In this respect it can be compared with the former Public Trust Office on Lambton Quay in Wellington, which has a similar, if more elaborate, corner treatment. The Hydro Grand's corner tower is made particularly distinctive by the incorporation of the open loggia at the upper level, immediately below the dome, a feature that responds to its commanding location and the views across Caroline Bay and the Port of Timaru.
- 14 The design is also given a distinctive character by the use of lunette windows extending along the Stafford Street façade from the corner tower, and by the incorporation of colonnaded and arcaded loggia's on the upper levels of this façade, features that were also designed to allow guests to enjoy the views over Caroline Bay. This feature is framed by double height oriel windows at either end of the Stafford Street façade and divided by a pair of oreil windows in the centre of the façade above the main entrance. These design elements all reflect the care taken by the architects to create a building that takes full advantage of its dominant location.
- 15 While the original elegance of the hotel's design has been compromised by unsightly accretions such as unsympathetic signage, fire-escapes and the exposed building services that have accumulated in more recent times, the essential features of the building are intact and the original elegance of Hall and Marchant's design could be recovered with sympathetic architectural treatment.

The significance of Timaru's architectural heritage within the context of Canterbury's architectural heritage as a whole, following the destruction of urban architectural heritage resulting from the Canterbury earthquakes

- 16 As a building of heritage significance (listed by Heritage New Zealand on 23rd June 1983 as a Category II Historic Place) the Hydro Grand has a distinctive presence not just in Timaru, but in the architectural history of Canterbury as a whole. With the destruction of the great bulk of early twentieth-century architectural heritage in central Christchurch, and in particular those buildings which shared similar rounded corners such as the former ANZ and Stranges Buildings on opposite corners of Lichfield and High Streets, the heritage and architectural significance of the Hydro Grand is now greater than it has ever been. As an urban, pre-world War I, Edwardian hotel building, it represents an architectural type that has completely disappeared from post-earthquake Christchurch. The radically changed heritage environment in Canterbury since 22 February 2011 makes the retention of buildings further afield in Canterbury, such as the Hydro Grand, of greater importance than ever before.
- 17 With its abundance of late Victorian, Edwardian and pre-World War Two buildings, Timaru has a distinctive architectural identity as a result of the contributions of the group of talented architects working in the City during the early decades of the twentieth century. This gives Timaru a unique opportunity to promote itself as a centre of architectural heritage, although clearly issues of seismic strengthening will need to be addressed. The restoration and strengthening of the Hydro Grand is an ideal project to stimulate this larger process of urban revitalisation and has the potential to play a key role in reviving Timaru's status as a tourist destination. Timaru also has the potential to promote its Edwardian seaside resort town character in a manner that compliments its proximity to the now internationally recognised Victorian architectural heritage of Oamaru, less than an hour's drive to the south. The demolition of the Hydro Grand, given the prominence of its location and its landmark quality, would, in my view, seriously compromise such an endeavour.
- 18 The loss of so much urban architectural heritage in central Christchurch following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes means that Timaru now has the highest concentration of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century commercial architecture in Canterbury. Not only is this of value in its own right but its representative importance is now correspondingly much greater. This situation further enhances the potential for Timaru to promote the tourism potential of its architectural heritage within the wider region as well as at a national level.

The value of heritage conservation in preserving regional identity and stimulating economic growth

- 19 Research in the United States has shown that restoration of heritage buildings generates economic activity that is equal to or greater than the construction of new buildings. This is documented in the 2010 report by Donovan D. Rypkema for Heritage New Zealand, *The Multiple Contributions of Heritage Conservation*. Rypkema's analysis shows that building restoration generates greater levels of employment than new builds and uses much less energy as well as contributing social and cultural benefits. In his conclusion he states: "*In the 21st century, only the foolish city will make a choice between heritage and economic development. The wise city will effectively utilize its historic environment to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs of its citizens far into the future.*" (*The Multiple Contributions of Heritage Conservation* New Zealand Heritage Places Trust, November, 2010).
- 20 There can be little or no justification for demolishing the Hydro Grand on the grounds that greater economic benefit will flow from a new building on the site. Restoration of the Hydro Grand will almost certainly provide economic benefits that will be equal to, or greater than, new construction and will have the added benefit of preserving a significant part of Timaru's heritage architecture and contribute to the distinctiveness of Timaru as a destination.

The ability of seismically strengthened heritage buildings to perform well in earthquakes

- 21 Experience in Christchurch has demonstrated that fully strengthened heritage buildings perform as well under seismic loads, and in some cases better than, more recently designed buildings. Seismically strengthened heritage buildings such as Bonnington's Building in High Street, the former Government Offices, now Heritage Hotel, in Worcester Street, and the buildings of New Regent Street, all returned to economic use well in advance of the opening of new buildings in the City. Given that Timaru is geologically more stable than Christchurch, vulnerability to earthquakes should not be seen as an argument for demolition of heritage buildings as significant as the Hydro Grand.

Conclusion

- 22 The Hydro Grand Hotel was designed by a regionally and nationally significant architect, Herbert Hall, who designed a wide range of buildings in Timaru, and further afield. He was recognised by his peers for the excellence of his designs. The Hydro Grand Hotel is a prominent Timaru landmark and a significant example of Edwardian hotel design, a building type that, following the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, is now rare. The Hydro Grand makes an important contribution to Timaru's identity as an early twentieth century resort

town and its loss would undermine the wider promotion of the City as a heritage destination. International research also demonstrates the economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits of heritage retention.

Ian James Lochhead

1 December 2016