

Attachment 6

Alternative Use assessment

Alternative use heritage impacts – Archifact



memorandum

archifact

architecture & conservation



limited

for: bloxam burnett & olliver
from: archifact – architecture & conservation ltd
date: 7 may 2020
re: block plant, temple view
adaptive reuse options

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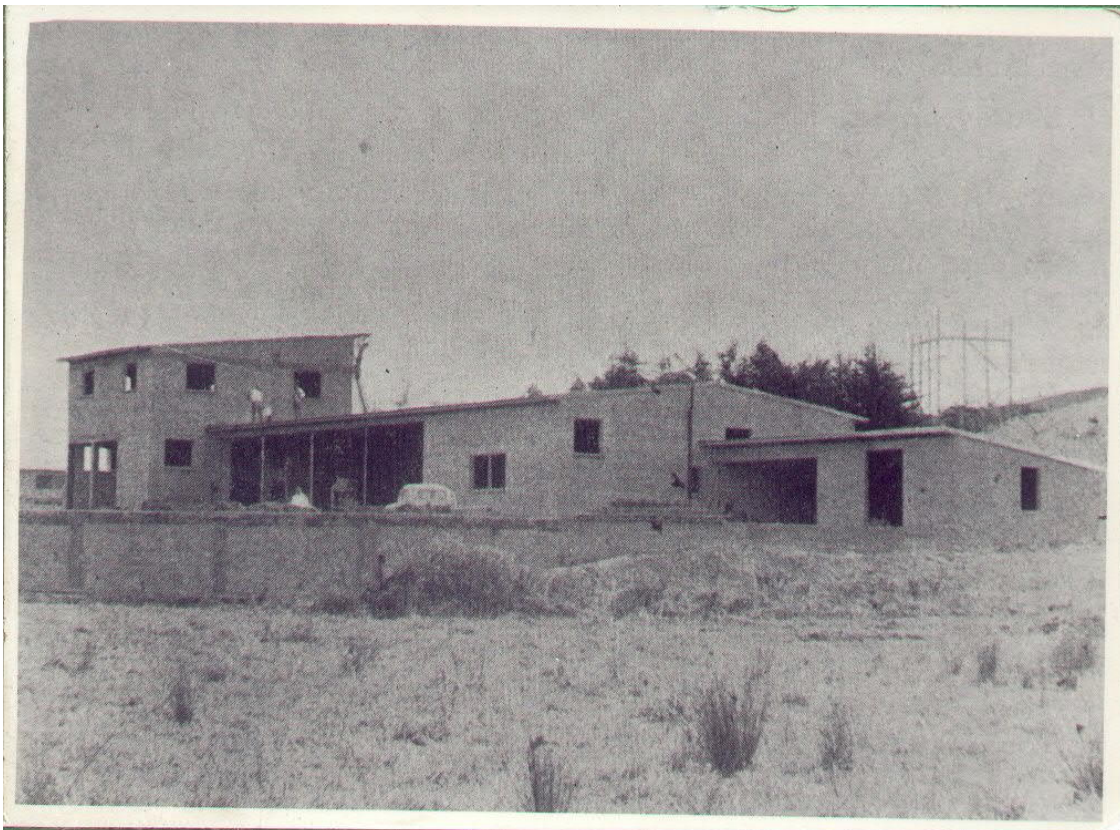


Figure 1: the Block Plant under construction in 1955

background

The Block Plant is included in *Schedule 8A: Built Heritage (structures, building, and associated sites)* of the Hamilton City Council [HCC] Operative District Plan (18 October 2017) [ODP] as a Category B place, ID# H135. The Block Plant has been recognised in the ODP for the following qualities:

- a - historic qualities
- b – physical/aesthetic/architectural qualities;
- c – context of group qualities
- f – cultural qualities.



The Block Plant (1956) was associated with the mechanised manufacture of cement blocks used in the construction of a large number of buildings in the Temple View area (including itself) and beyond; and most notably the Temple at Temple View. The Block Plant replaced earlier hand and machine-pressed masonry blocks produced elsewhere on the former Church College of New Zealand (**CCNZ**) campus.

The Block Plant is a utilitarian building that has been modified over time; particularly since the original block making activity became redundant. Today, while the Block Plant is recognised in the ODP for its inclusion as a Category B heritage asset, it is arguably more recognisably associated with its function as an ancillary building during the operation of CCNZ where it was used for storage, for maintenance equipment and as a sports' changing room and training facility. The Block Plant was in use as an ancillary building for a much longer period than that of block manufacture¹. The CCNZ campus was closed at the end of the 2009 academic year.

introduction

An exploration of conservation, through adaptive reuse, of the existing heritage-listed Block Plant building at Temple View has resulted in a number of options being considered and of those options two have been considered in detail. These options are:

- Residential; and,
- Commercial.

In order to consider these options reasonably, each option has been considered through both architectural and structural lenses, and with likely costs and economic feasibility estimated. The extent of interior and exterior reordering required to enable the adaptive reuse options explored below both require significant additional interventions. These interventions in turn result in further architectural and structural considerations which result in additional adverse effects to the original fabric and historic integrity of the building as a whole as recognised in the ODP. The effects arising from these interventions have been given careful consideration from an historic heritage effects perspective.

Structural analysis undertaken by Beca shows that the building currently conforms to somewhere between 40-50% new building standard (**NBS**). As this building falls below 67%NBS, it is categorised as an "Earthquake Risk" building in terms of the definition recommended by the New Zealand Society of Earthquake Engineering. Accordingly, if a decision was made to renovate the building to accommodate an "alternative use" there will be a statutory requirement to strengthen and equally one (driven by requirements of the Building Act) to meet current Building Code compliance. While this analysis shows that the building meets minimum standards for occupation in its current form, this does not necessarily equate to a desirable occupation level when measured against market expectations and this is well illustrated in the Telfer Young *Market Valuation* analysis report.

option 1: commercial (offices)

This option adapts the existing building to commercial use through the creation of three office units and provides for a commercial activity in what is soon to become a

¹ The Block Plant was utilised for block making for 15 years between 1955 and c1970 and for the following 50 years served as an ancillary building for the CCNZ (until the end of 2009) and for storage since then.

residential area. Adaptive reuse of the former Block Plant for commercial activities is outside the consented Comprehensive Development Plan area 2 activities and is also physically disconnected from the already consented² commercial/retail area closer to Tuhikaramea Road.

Significantly, the Block Plant building has, today, lost its surrounding topographic context and setting; the immediate ground form having already been heavily modified in accordance with existing land use and earthworks consents granted in recent years. This, in itself, has arguably adversely affected the context values recognised in the ODP listing associated with the Block Plant.

In order to provide useable open plan floor plates appropriate to the office use, the degree of architectural modification of the existing interior will result in the loss of existing interior (albeit not protected) fabric along with significant modifications to the protected external building envelope. This is helpfully illustrated in the Beca sketch drawings SE-K003 and SE-K004 which illustrate the existing walls that will need to be demolished (this also extends to existing floors and footings) which results in a quantitative removal of more than 50% of these elements.

Equally, the proposed adaptive reuse of the Block Plant for commercial activity will require a high level of modification in order to provide the requisite level of interior amenity anticipated by this occupation. Of particular note this modification introduces a significant level of alteration to the east elevation³ and includes a high degree of modification of the original and existing building fabric in order to provide commercial glazing. This degree of change is also evident to the western and northern elevations, while the southern elevation remains relatively intact.

The structural strengthening identified in the Beca report and the subsequent review of the proposed architectural adaptive reuse option for commercial activity prepared by Walker Community Architects identifies a number of further interventions that target 67% and 100%NBS options. The extent of invasive strengthening and associated demolition of existing floor slabs and walls clearly shows that quantitatively a significant proportion of these elements would require demolition where required to meet the designed adaptation reconstruction. This action would directly affect the authenticity of the building fabric of the heritage building and the legibility of its heritage building typology, and correspondingly impact the historic heritage values for which the Block Plant was recognised in the ODP.

option 2: residential (apartments)

This option adapts the existing building to residential use through the creation of six apartments. While this adaptation aligns with the anticipated surrounding residential activity and its emerging residential context, it presents a different residential typology (from the anticipated scale of single house to a multi-unit apartment building; being a typology not found elsewhere in this part of the Temple View project).

The proposed adaptation results in a high level of modification of the exterior and interior fabric (helpfully illustrated in the Beca sketch drawings SE-K001 and SE-K002) in order to provide the necessary level of amenity anticipated by this occupation. This is driven particularly by the required subdivision of the building and the provision of fenestration to all elevations, where all but the southern elevation would be modified. Existing historic changes to the eastern elevation (for example)

² The CDP1 consent (HCC reference 10.2016.00009082.001) has authorised 500 m² of retail activity on part of the site adjacent to Tuhikaramea Road.

³ Walkers Option 1 – Office Complex Elevation Drawing A06

would be further modified leaving even less detail from the original design evident. These changes would result in a quantitative and qualitative loss of value to the physical/aesthetic/architectural qualities recognised in the ODP listing.

In order to provide useable open plan floor plates appropriate to this activity the degree of architectural modification of the existing interior planning will result in the loss of existing interior (albeit not protected) fabric and modifications to the protected external historic heritage building envelope. Equally, the proposed adaptive reuse of the Block Plant for residential activity will require a high level of modification in order to provide the level of interior amenity required by the Building Act by this occupation and anticipated in the Telfer Young *Market Valuation* report analysis.

The structural strengthening identified in the Beca report and the subsequent review of the proposed architectural adaptive reuse option for residential activity prepared by Walker Community Architects identifies a number of further interventions that target 67% and 100%NBS options. As the Beca Seismic Assessment of the Block Plant report recognises in considering this adaptation: “*if a change of use to residential was proposed, then commercial drivers may dictate a performance of 100%NBS be achieved*”. The extent of invasive strengthening and associated demolition of existing floor slabs and walls clearly shows that quantitatively a significant percentage of these elements would require demolition where required to meet the designed adaptation reconstruction. This action would directly affect the authenticity of the building fabric of the heritage building and correspondingly impact on the historic heritage values for which the Block Plant was recognised in the ODP.

These modifications introduce a significant level of alteration to the east elevation⁴ with a high degree of modification of the original and existing building fabric in order to provide sufficient glazing to allow natural light into each apartment. This is also evident to the western and northern elevations, while the southern elevation remains relatively intact.

conclusion

The potential for adaptive reuse of the listed Block Plant building has been recognised. An exercise in considering appropriate adaptation has resulted in detailed exploration of the two most relevant adaptive reuse options within the evolving surrounding context and considering the impacts on the recognised historic heritage values associated with the Block Plant. The analysis of those options through architectural, structural, planning, valuation, and heritage lenses has recognised that the degree of intervention required to ensure the structural resilience of the building, the architectural compliance with provisions of the Building Act, the consented surrounding context, and the relevance of the adaptation in the current market results in degrees of physical intervention to the heritage fabric that adversely affects the historic heritage values for which the Block House was included in the ODP.

The Telfer Young *Market Valuation* report analysis acknowledges that the current COVID-19 market is resulting in “*a very cautious approach to property investment*”, will influence a “*quite specific*” market demand, and that currently there is “*significant market uncertainty*”, and that the location and the COVID-19 market would “*reduce the number of potential investors*”.

⁴ Walker Architects Option 2 – Apartments, Elevations Drawing A06

From an historic heritage value and effects perspective the consented surrounding enabling and development works associated with the Comprehensive Development Plan for the area has already shifted the values and significance of the Block Plant. This is addressed in our memo considering the cumulative effects of removing the Block Plant on the Temple View area. The adaptive reuse options require significant intervention and alteration (resulting in loss) of original Block Plant building fabric and a loss of legibility of the original Block Plant typology and consequential values as recognised in the ODP.

In conclusion, and from an historic heritage effects position, I do not consider that either adaptive re-use options should be required instead of demolition. In this instance these options are no more appropriate than demolition given the significant further alterations to, and loss of, heritage building fabric would be involved beyond what has already occurred over many years.