

memorandum

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for: HCC Community Facilities
from: archifact – architecture & conservation ltd
date: 07 october 2019
re: hamilton municipal pools

This Memo considers, from an historic heritage perspective, the draft structural assessment of the grandstand at the Municipal Pool complex undertaken by WSP Opus and dated 7 October 2019. In considering this assessment we are mindful of the commentary from Richard Knott Limited following his *Peer Review – Heritage* dated 3rd July 2019 that refinement to the proposed interpretative plan offered as mitigation to the proposed demolition of the Category B Municipal Pools complex might retain the grandstand.

1. Comments on the WSP Opus structural assessment of the grandstand

- 1.1 From an historic heritage values perspective condition is not a determinant of value.
- 1.2 The historic heritage status of the site, which includes the grandstand and other related structures and buildings, is recognised in the Hamilton City Operative District Plan as a Category B scheduled item, item no. H88 (Municipal Pools). The ODP scheduling recognises its heritage values as:
 - a (historic qualities);
 - b (physical/aesthetic/architectural qualities);
 - c (context or group qualities);
 - d (technological qualities); and,
 - f (cultural attributes).
- 1.3 The report provides compelling evidence of the scope and extent of changes undertaken to the fabric of the grandstand structure over time. That analysis identifies a number of changes to what is considered to have been the original structure and fabric of the grandstand including:
 - timber lateral bracing members;
 - concrete and concrete block steps; and,
 - finger-jointed floor boards.
- 1.4 Our *Assessment of Heritage Values* report (October 2018) recognised that the 1912 grandstand was originally an open (unroofed) structure and that the roof was not constructed until 1939. The Opus report also notes that the concrete blocks that form the lower two bleacher steps to the grandstand are unlikely to be original as “...concrete blocks are untypical for the time of original construction ...” of the grandstand that the first concrete block design standard was not introduced into New Zealand until 1948. This confirms an assumption



we made in our *Assessment of Heritage Values* report (October 2018) in recording the chronology of development of the grandstand in our analysis of the entire complex.

- 1.5 The extent of changes to the fabric of the grandstand raises interest from an historic heritage perspective with respect to consideration of the authenticity of the grandstand, its structure, and fabric.
- 1.6 The findings of the assessment reveal that the structural resilience is of concern, scoring 5% NBS with respect to its seismic performance and 4% NBS with respect to its ability to resist wind loading. Both of these assessed results are significantly below the minimum %NBS ratings for structures of Importance Level 2 presents relative risk to the life safety of occupants of the building and that as the %NBS is below 34%NBS defines the structure as earthquake-prone in terms of the Building Act 2004 and that it is a “*high risk structure*”¹.
- 1.7 Accordingly, a “*significant upgrade is required*” if the grandstand were to be used in any sort of public capacity in the future. The consequence of that required upgrade could directly affect the heritage attributes for which it was included in the ODP as the scope and extent of the required works (noting also that the geotechnical soils classification for the site has been classified as ‘Class D’ (deep or soft soil site)²) risks further loss of original fabric and the potential reconstruction of the entire structure (including foundations) in order to meet the requirements of the Building Act.

2. Mitigation and conclusion

- 2.1 Mr Knott considered “*further thought should be given to whether specific elements of the existing buildings such as the grandstand, can be retained.*” The parlous condition of the whole complex, noting particularly the lack of authentic heritage integrity evident in the grandstand from the WSP Opus report, and the nature of the geotechnology beneath it make consideration of this suggestion problematic without facing the prospect of significant reconstruction of those elements; significantly lessening the historic authenticity of the surviving heritage.
- 2.2 The retention of the grandstand sits uncomfortably with the proposed integration of the pool site with the surrounding Ferrybank reserve, as the orientation of the grandstand within the enhanced public domain fails to appropriately address the natural orientation of the park, the historic heritage bandstand within it, and the Waikato River as the natural focus and destination of this domain. Disengaged from its original context, the authenticity of the grandstand, its fabric, and its parlous structural resilience revealed through the detailed scrutiny provided by the WSP Opus report means it presents very low (if any) heritage value.
- 2.3 I conclude that demolition of the existing municipal pools’ grandstand would not be inappropriate and equally that retention would compromise both the pools’ site and the use of the adjacent reserve.

¹ WSP Opus Structural Assessment – Grandstand at Municipal Pool, p7 10 Conclusions and Recommendations

² WSP Opus Structural Assessment – Grandstand at Municipal Pool, p2 3.1 Site Geotechnical Information