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architecture & conservation



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old new lynn hotel  
new lynn  
heritage feasibility assessment

for  
waitakere city council  
henderson

march 2008

AI

prepared for:

waitakere city council  
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Waitakere

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final

auckland, march 2008

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## **1. commission**

Archifact Ltd. has been commissioned by Waitakere City Council (WCC) to prepare a heritage feasibility assessment.

The commissioning agent is:

Aina Wimmer for  
Waitakere City Council.

## **2. brief**

The brief for the project requires Archifact to undertake a heritage feasibility assessment for the Old New Lynn Hotel building. This assessment includes:

- the review of a Heritage Assessment and Building Report prepared by Works Consultancy Services Ltd. In March 1995;
- the review of a structural report prepared by Chester Consultants Ltd. In June 1999;
- the review of a structural report prepared by Opus International Consultants Ltd. in February 2002
- the review of a draft Conservation Plan, prepared by Dave Pearson Architects in January 2006;
- the review of a geotechnical report prepared by Soil and Rock Consultants in July 2006;
- the review of a Method Statement for refurbishment prepared by Chester Consultants Ltd in August 2006;
- the current condition of the building including its structural performance ;and
- a statement on the feasibility of the conservation of the building according to best conservation practice.

Other structures on site and the building's context are excluded from this assessment.

## **3. status of the place**

### **3.1 address**

Old New Lynn Hotel  
3176 Great North Road  
New Lynn  
Waitakere

### **3.2 ownership**

The Old New Lynn Hotel is currently owned by Waitakere City Council.

The building was purchased from a private owner by WCC in 2005. The building was at the time in dangerous condition and unsafe to occupy.

### **3.3 legal description**

The property is registered under the following legal description:

Lots 12 and 13 DP 22829, A 617260 with an area of 852sqm

### **3.4 local authority designation**

The Old New Lynn Hotel is scheduled Category I by the Waitakere City Council in District Plan Heritage Appendix (CHI No.: 1578).

The building has also been issued with a Heritage Protection Order.

### **3.5 registration**

The Old New Lynn Hotel is not registered under the provisions of the Historic Places Act 1993.

## **4. acknowledgements**

This assessment has been prepared by Archifact Ltd, Heike Lutz-Strulik (Dipl. Ing Arch, MArch) in March 2008. The structural assessment has been undertaken by John Syme, MSC Consultants.

We would like to thank Alina Wimmer of Waitakere City Council for her commissioning of this assessment and her interest and enthusiasm in this project.

## **5. executive summary**

This assessment has been prepared to determine the feasibility of the conservation of the Old New Lynn Hotel.

Several structural reports have been provided for this building during the last 13 years. All of these reports have found considerable structural problems with the building and have pointed out the urgency of remedial work required. Over the years a continuous worsening of the situation has been documented due to lack of maintenance in general, the lack of appropriate foundations and structural ties, as well as the poor quality of materials and workmanship. Another cause for the structural problems is vegetation growth that has contributed to further deterioration in the building.

The general problem of poor quality materials and workmanship is original to the building and in our opinion a major issue, which cannot be remedied through a structural upgrade.

Although the various fires that the building has withstood have not greatly added to the structural deterioration, they have destroyed significant original fabric of the building.

A conservation plan prepared for this building outlines the historical background. It also assesses the cultural heritage significance of the place. However, we only agree partially with this assessment.

In our opinion the main significance for this place is its local social and cultural heritage significance and its landmark value. Overall we would rate the building as having moderate significance. We do not agree that the condition of the place can be made a criterion in the assessment of cultural heritage significance.

The conservation plan does not adhere to the ICOMOS NZ Charter in a number of instances.

The structural integrity of this building has now reached a critical point. Although, technically and theoretically possible, the structural upgrade of the building would require large scale reconstruction that will incur extraordinarily high costs. In this process very little significant fabric can be saved.

In essence, the remainder of visible elements of heritage significance is limited to nine windows. The interior will be completely rebuilt. None of the original and significant internal fabric will be left.

To retain the significant elements that remain and to rebuild the building is possible but expensive. The building will also have to be adapted. Should the building be retained and upgraded, the process could not be considered as conservation.

Should the decision be made to demolish the building it is important to ensure that the cultural heritage significance that the building held is interpreted in an appropriate way.

## **6. review of documentation**

### **6.1 Heritage Assessment and Building Report prepared by Works Consultancy Services Ltd. in March 1995:**

This report assesses the historical significance of the building, its structural and material condition.

It assigns historical significance to the building due to its age, aesthetic and architectural significance because of the use of Italianate features, states likelihood to have social and cultural significance, and technological significance because of the use of locally made bricks. The building type, a hotel, has been assessed as significant due to its uniqueness in west Auckland.

In our opinion the assessment of the heritage significance of the building shows a lack of research and therefore a lack of evidence. The age of a building does not per se award a building with historical significance. The use of very poor quality bricks (even though locally made) and mortar does not award technological significance for a place, unless the poor quality and workmanship is to be seen as an educational tool. Although, we agree that the building does have significance, there was no evidence provided in this report to support this.

A concern for the west and east wall's structural integrity noted in the report has resulted in the construction of buttresses in the past. The effectiveness of these is questioned in the report. Movement in the walls was still apparent after the buttresses have been constructed. A number of causes of the deterioration of the building have been found including seasonal ground movements, material drying shrinkage, temperature effects, vegetation growth and heavy traffic vibrations in addition to poor quality of original materials and craftsmanship and deferred maintenance. The building's deterioration has been classified as structurally significant and a possible collapse of the building could not be discounted.

Although currently the traffic vibrations add to the structural deterioration of the building, we believe in a situation where structural upgrades have been made and foundations to an appropriate depth have been installed, the traffic vibration will no longer have an adverse effect.

We agree that the deterioration in the building is due to a number of factors. The lack of appropriate foundations as well as the poor quality of materials and workmanship is a main cause for the structural problems. As we found too, vegetation has contributed to further deterioration in the building, mainly because the sub-standard quality of the mortar has allowed root networks to penetrate the joints between the brickwork.

It was recommended in the report that the foundations be rebuilt. Demolition and reconstruction of the east and parts of the north wall was seen as required. However, it was also noted that these upgrading measures would not mitigate the main problem of the use of poor quality materials in the original building.

The general problem of poor quality materials and workmanship is in Archifact's opinion a major issue, which cannot be remedied through a structural upgrade.

## **6.2 Structural report prepared by Chester Consultants Ltd. in June 1999:**

This report was undertaken four years after the first structural assessment as an update to the above.

The report states further deterioration and the fact that, although the Council had advised the owner at the time of a real risk and a requirement for structural upgrade, nothing had been done.

Gaps and cracks in the walls had worsened drastically over those four years, movement of the ground below the east wall was seen as the cause of increased gapping between buttresses and wall and bowing of the walls to the outside.

The building has been assessed as earthquake prone. Remedial works have been suggested including the tying of the facade to a concrete lining introduced to the interior, as well as the removal of plaster work adjacent to cracks.

Chester Consultants found again in 1999 that the building is "...overdue for structural repair and recommend that Council acts expediently in ensuring that repairs are carried out as soon as possible to reduce their risk."

In our opinion the building had at this time reached a critical state. The immediate action that Chester Consultants suggested would have been crucial to save the building and ensure significant elements of cultural heritage value could have been conserved. However, since the cracking of the walls had substantially increased, it seems obvious that most, if not all, of the plasterwork (and herewith significant decorative elements) would have to be removed and replaced.

### **6.3 Structural report prepared by Opus International Consultants Ltd. in February 2002:**

This report states the condition of the building in general and in particular after a fire has damaged the building.

Opus assesses the condition pre-fire as being poor. The quality of the bricks, mortar and workmanship has been seen as the cause of deterioration over time. In addition, settlement of foundations and a lack of restraint of the wall to floors and roof have been considered to have contributed to the poor condition.

The fire was seen to have only directly damaged the upper storey. The loss of parts of the ceiling and some floorboards has added additional strain on the structural integrity however this has been viewed as structurally insignificant. Further deterioration in the years between 1999 and 2002 has been noted that are not linked to the fire damage but to general consistent worsening of the building's condition.

This report has also been able to confirm the poor workmanship regarding the timber members of the construction that make up the floors and ceilings.

In our opinion it is obvious that over the years the lack of action on the often stated and confirmed structural issues of the building has greatly contributed to the extremely poor state the building is in today.

### **6.4 Draft Conservation Plan, prepared by Dave Pearson Architects in January 2006:**

The conservation plan describes the history of the place, the people associated with it and describes the building. An assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the building is included as well as conservation policies.

The conservation plan is said to be written in accordance with the ICOMOS NZ Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value. In our opinion there are a number of issues that are not consistent with the ICOMOS charter.

The degrees of significance are classified as exceptional, considerable, some, slight, not relevant and intrusive. There is some explanation as to the extent of significance that is attributed to those degrees, however a definition of these degrees is not provided. The conservation plan states that generally the elements that have "exceptional" or "considerable" significance are those items that originate in 1882. Later fabric that has been added shortly after 1882 is of only "some/slight" significance and changes made during the 65 years of private ownership by the Bartulovich family are mainly of "no relevance" or "intrusive".

The condition of a place or element does not determine its cultural heritage value. The conservation plan describes elements which are damaged or in poor condition as of only "some" significance even though they are original. This may imply that the entire building is only of "some" significance due to its derelict state and dilapidated condition. This approach is not in accordance with the ICOMOS NZ Charter or international conservation practice.

In accordance with the principles of the ICOMOS Charter:

*"The evidence of time and the contributions of all periods should be respected in conservation".*

The fact that changes have been made shortly after the original building was completed does not necessarily lead to a lesser value of these items. The lack of acknowledgement of 65 years of occupation by one family and the historical layers that they have introduced as the longest resident owners of this place does not reflect best conservation practice in approach.

In general, a distinction may be missing that recognises the values of a building with local significance in comparison to a building of regional or national significance. We believe this building has local significance.

Regarding the historical significance we believe it has moderate significance. Although it has a connection to the brewery industry there are better examples of early hotels and pubs that have contributed to Auckland's brewing history.

We recognise the association of this place with the development of New Lynn as an evaluation criterion attesting to its social significance. The urban development of New Lynn is not linked to a certain historical event, but with general social and cultural development.

We agree with the social and landmark values assigned.

With regards to the scientific values, we disagree with the assessment in the conservation plan. Although it is correct that the construction techniques can be seen, the construction of a brick wall with plaster render is not particularly special and many examples of this exist. In addition, it has repeatedly been established how poor the quality of the bricks, the mortar and the workmanship is. We assign no value to such poor construction practice.

There are some inconsistencies regarding the degrees of significance of certain elements. The windows of the south elevation are stated as being replaced, however in the significance table they are stated as original fabric with considerable significance. The chimney breast of the kitchen is considered original fabric. Compared to other original fabric of the building that is generally evaluated with 'considerable' or 'exceptional' significance, this only is assigned 'some' significance. There is also original timber floor that has a low rating. The early lean-to structures of the south elevation are rated as 'recent fabric' with some significance. However, the same additions have been described also as having been added shortly after the building was completed and therefore would have to be rated 'later fabric'.

The Statement of Significance concludes with an overall rating of the building as having "exceptional significance". We are unclear how this can be achieved when only few individual elements are assessed as having exceptional significance and most of the fabric is rated below this as having "some/ slight" significance or are "not relevant" or "intrusive".

From our point of view the building has some features that are of considerable significance, however overall the building is of moderate significance, in keeping with its local values.

The policies that are laid out in the conservation plan to ensure the safeguarding of the cultural heritage values of the building are impossible to be adhered to due to the poor quality of the building and the structural issues that have worsened over the years. The policies have not considered the particular values and factors affecting this place. To implement the structural upgrade as suggested by the Chester Consultant's report most of the existing building fabric will be lost. This results in the reduction of the building's architectural values, removes any possible remaining evidence of how the building has been used, removes every earlier plan layout, removes technological evidence of earlier construction methods, and except of very few individual items, all significant fabric is removed in the process. There is no suggestion that walls and floors removed will be reconstructed in accordance with original positions and, if it they were to be the extent of reconstruction clearly contradicts principle 19 of the ICOMOS NZ Charter where it states that "*reconstruction should not normally constitute the majority of a place*".

In detail the policies state:

Policy 1.1 Uses for the building – The modifications to the building seem to be driven in this case not by the possibly changing use but by the structural requirements. Therefore the use should be compatible with the uses the building had over time which is mainly hospitality and accommodation.

Policy 2 Conservation processes – The treatment proposed for elements that are of exceptional and considerable significance cannot be followed due to the building's derelict and structurally unsafe state. Stabilisation, maintenance, repair or restoration as described in the ICOMOS NZ Charter are impossible processes to achieve a safe and usable structure without significant intervention which compromises the heritage significance attributed to those elements of recognised value.

Policy 3 Retention of significance – Repair of exceptionally significant elements are only possible for very selected elements and generally most of the fabric with this status needs to be replaced.

Policy 4 Recovery of significance – The alterations and additions made to the hotel will necessarily be removed by implementing the structural upgrade. Recovering significance would only be possible through reconstruction. However, according to principals set out in the ICOMOS NZ Charter the reconstruction of significant parts of a building) is seen as replication and is not deemed an appropriate conservation process. Reconstruction should typically not consist of more than 50% by volume.

Policy 5 Work to the building – We disagree with the assessment of the quality of the materials and the workmanship. As has been established in several reports, the quality of materials and workmanship used to construct this building is one of the major problems that caused the building to be in the poor state that it is in as stated by the structural reports. We would recommend any materials and workmanship used in the conservation of this place to be of considerably higher standard than the original. In addition the work necessary to bring the building to a usable and safe standard is of such nature that prohibits reversibility.

Policy 6 Conservation standards – We agree with the requirement for all work to conform to the principles set out in the ICOMOS NZ Charter. However, the advanced deterioration in the building does not seem to allow the conservation of the building under the principles of best conservation practice. The extent of original fabric lost in the process would require large scale reconstruction and replication. This would not conform to the above mentioned conservation standards.

Policy 7 Consultation and review - We agree that any proposal for work on this building should be reviewed by the relevant authorities. We understand that the commissioning of this report is the first step undertaken by the Waitakere City Council in this review process. Discussions with New Zealand Historic Places Trust should be sought to achieve the best possible outcome for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage values of this place.

#### **6.5 Geotechnical report prepared by Soil and Rock Consultants in July 2006:**

The geotechnical report has been undertaken to establish sub-soil conditions that may have contributed to the structural issues that the building faces. In addition it provides recommendations on the design of any new foundations that may be introduced.

The high expansive soil characteristics in addition to non-engineered fill and ground moisture depletion have been found the most likely causes of the movement in the building. The existing foundations are of inconsistent quality and depth.

To provide an adequate sub-surface for a new concrete slab and allow for new foundations ground work has to be undertaken inside and outside the building.

The site is considered an archaeological site according to the Historic Places Act 1993 due to its human occupation before 1900. An authority from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust to destroy or modify the site under Section 11 of the Historic Places Act is required before any ground work can be undertaken on site.

In our opinion it is very likely that the archaeological investigation results in finds that require assessment.

#### **6.6 Method Statement for refurbishment prepared by Chester Consultants Ltd in August 2006:**

The Method Statement addresses the procedures required to implement a structural upgrade to the building. The building is described as having had no maintenance over a substantial period of time and is therefore in a very dilapidated condition. It also refers to a necessary upgrade to Earthquake standards.

In general it recommends removing the following existing items that are of various degrees of significance and replacing them with new elements:

- all foundations to interior and exterior walls;
- the entire floor (concrete and timber) of the ground level;
- the entire ceiling of the ground level;
- the entire floor of the upper level including joists;

- the entire ceiling of the upper level;
- the entire roof structure;
- the entire exterior plaster surface;
- the complete east wall;
- large amounts of derelict brickwork;
- all internal wall linings;
- removal of parts of chimney breasts;

The structural upgrade requires the removal and replacement of significant amounts of original fabric. In essence, the only original elements retained would be some of the timber windows, and some brick wall areas that are obscured internally by the concrete layer introduced and externally by a new plaster render.

Although technically and theoretically possible, we believe the structural upgrade has an adverse effect on the cultural heritage significance of the place. The methodology suggested is not consistent with principles laid out in the ICOMOS NZ Charter. The amount of new fabric introduced and existing fabric removed cannot be seen as conservation, but reconstruction.

An independent structural report undertaken for this assessment has revealed that the condition of the building has further deteriorated since the last report was undertaken.

Further structural movement has occurred and additional deterioration due to moisture ingress is apparent.

The method described by Chester Consultants for the structural strengthening of the building has been reviewed.

Although the methods proposed are recognised procedures for a structural upgrade of a building, they introduce significant technical difficulties and extensive costs including:

The difficulties involved include:

- The extent of cracking and movement on the North and East walls makes in situ repair virtually impossible and these walls need to be taken down and rebuilt.
- Walls that have moved cannot be straightened or realigned. Due to the poor bonding quality of the mortar any jacking is likely to displace the bricks. Since the North and East walls need to be rebuilt, they can be constructed vertical. The movement on the South and West walls is less and the out of alignment will not be critical from a structural aspect when tied to a new concrete wall.
- The exterior plaster which is badly cracked needs to be removed and the mortar joints taken out and repointed. All the plaster will need to be removed due to the widespread cracking.
- Damaged or missing bricks need to be replaced. On the south and West walls this could amount to 10% of the walls.
- The principal problem is the quality of the bricks. With the proposed construction (Chester Consultants) the new concrete is dowelled to the bricks. However, the bricks are so poor that it is unlikely that an adequate and long-term bond between the bricks and dowels can be

maintained especially under seismic loads. This will be especially likely on the thick perimeter walls where the outer brick layer is likely to peel off. It would be advisable to obtain testing from a recognised laboratory on the brick strength, bond and dowel connections before proceeding.

- The construction sequences and safety aspects during construction will be important and while generally well defined in Chester's report it is essential that all brick remedial work is completed before the upgrade is commenced to gain the maximum possible strength from the existing walls.
- With the proposed construction method it is likely that shotcreting in lifts of 2m height will not be safe. It is likely that additional temporary strengthening of the brick which acts as formwork will be necessary while this is underway.
- The concreting of the internal of the chimneys will need to be done in small lifts as the bricks are in poor condition and blow out when pouring is likely.
- Consideration will need to be given to the exterior ground levels in relation to the new concrete floor and the perimeter may need to be paved to reduce water penetration. This paving should feed water into an access pit for collection. To further control stormwater the downpipes need to be connected properly to a satisfactory stormwater pipe. A perimeter trench drawn to keep the water table down needs to be installed.
- No details of damp proofing around the new slab and footings are provided.
- A detailed cost assessment needs to be obtained from a quantity surveyor to establish a. The nature of the work is very piece meal and hence time consuming.

## 6.7 Conclusion

A conservation plan prepared for this building outlines the historical background. It also assesses the cultural heritage significance of the place. However, we agree only in parts with this assessment.

In our opinion the main significance for this place is its local social and cultural heritage significance and its landmark value. Overall we would rate the building as having moderate significance. We do not agree that the condition of the place can be made a criterion in the assessment of cultural heritage significance.

The conservation plan does not adhere to the ICOMOS NZ Charter in a number of instances and a number of the policies laid out are irrelevant or impossible for this particular building to adhere to.

The history of structural reports states the poor condition and the increasing deterioration of the structural integrity of the building over at least 13 years of negative progress. It has repeatedly been noted even in the first reports that time is of essence and a quick response to the structural problems is required. The building is now in such poor structural condition that the building is practically required to be rebuilt.

The general problem of poor quality materials and workmanship is in our opinion a major issue, which cannot be remedied through a structural upgrade.

Although the various fires that the building has withstood have not greatly added to the structural deterioration, it has demolished significant original fabric of the building.

From our point of view there is little merit in the reconstruction of the building. Its reconstruction would require the re-use of the original fabric, which means the poor quality bricks. This would not be advisable from a structural point of view. The quality of the bricks is so poor that the same structural issues would appear in the long term, as seen today.

In our opinion it is very likely that the archaeological investigation results in finds that require assessment.

**7. condition**

The condition assessment of the site and its buildings has been undertaken on two occasions in February 2008 as visual inspections only. No physical investigation or materials analysis has been undertaken. The report assesses the New Lynn Hotel building only. All images haven been taken by Archifact Ltd. And document the condition of the buildings in February and March 2008.

**7.1 Site**

The site consists of two lots. The one to the west is empty , the one to the east has two derelict brick buildings on it. The buildings are the double storey Old New Lynn Hotel built 1882 and an outhouse of much more recent origin. Both buildings are dangerous and insanitary.

The site is currently secured with a fence towards the street and partly towards the west boundary of the eastern site. Easy access to the site is possible from the eastern boundary from the neighbouring property and also from the western property to the south.

The Hotel building is boarded up. The outhouse is fully accessible.

The outhouse seems to be occupied by homeless people.

The security measures require improvement to avoid any danger to the public.



Hotel north facade



Outhouse north facade



Hotel south facade



Outhouse west facade



Adjacent empty lot



Outhouse east facade



Occupation of derelict building by homeless

## 7.2 Building exterior

### Foundations

The foundations are shallow brick foundations of approximately three layers of brick that are insufficient for the loads from above.

No moisture barrier has been installed and the brickwork suffers from rising damp.

There is no sufficient clearance between the natural ground and the floor joists of the ground level. Permanent dampness has contributed to a large amount of rotten timber members in the subfloor.

The exterior brickwork at ground level is in very poor condition. Mortar has deteriorated in all visible areas and vegetation has grown through the wall from the outside to the interior.

Due to the loss of mortar and the poor quality of the bricks a number of bricks have been completely lost while others have deteriorated to various degrees. Some of the bricks are loose and can be pulled out by hand.

Damage of this kind at the base of the wall is detrimental for any materials above.



Rotten floor joists in hallway



Missing bricks at base of north west corner



Floor joists on ground in hallway



Missing plaster and mortar joints at base of brickwork north west corner



Ground level at back of building in hallway



Cracking and spalling of brickwork at base of north west corner



Extensive growth at base of brick wall east façade, root work damaging shallow foundations



Deterioration of plaster, mortar joints and brickwork due to vegetation growth at base of walls