



Appendix 2

Land Use Consent LU 2016/204

Further Information

RURAL CITY LIVING



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9 May 2106

Ms Rosie Given
Resource Management Officer
Gore District Council
P O Box 8
GORE 9740

Dear Rosie

LAND USE CONSENT LU 2016/204 – 1 IRK ST

I refer to your Further Information request dated 20 April 2016 and addressed to Mr Graham and Mrs Tara Maxwell. Mr and Mrs Maxwell have asked me to respond on their behalf as follows.

1. Details of the adaptive reuse options that were explored and the reasons why these options were not adopted.

Methodist services were last held in the building at 1 Irk St, Gore, approximately 14 years ago. The church was subsequently leased by the Apostolic Church for several years, before its purchase by the Parere Trust. (The Trust). The Bible Chapel continued using it for church services for several years until declining attendances made it not worthwhile to continue. There were queries from other groups for use of the building, but only on a rent-free or low rent basis. This is at least partly because the traditional arrangement of the existing church building does not lend itself to modern styles of worship, in particular the sloping floor. Church architecture is trending away from the traditional 'toast rack' arrangement of pews all facing the front, to different and more versatile arrangements. Also, at that stage, the best information available to the Trust from a professional consulting engineer (GM Designs Ltd) was that the building was believed to be earthquake prone.

I was engaged by the Trust in 2012 to assist the Trust to investigate options for the site and building, including both demolition and sale as a vacant commercial site, and adaptive re-use of that part of

the church building that is identified in the Gore District Plan in Table 2.5.1 as a Scheduled Heritage Structure (H 17).

My file shows that the Trust was actively seeking to investigate options for the building including 'adaptive re-use' from June 2012 until it sold the building to the present owners in February 2016.

Several meetings were held with His Worship the Mayor, the CEO and staff from the Gore District Council over the period 2012 - 2015, in which the Trust indicated its desire to sell the building and land, but also its willingness to consider options that would enable adaptive re-use of the building.

The Trust had no reason itself to investigate or commission any design option. It needed to divest itself of an asset which had become a liability.

Over 2012 – 2013 the Trust prepared and sought to lodge a resource consent application for demolition of the Church, to enable it to market a cleared site. This was in response to advice that it had received from the real estate agent acting for it at the time, Mr Roy Burgess of Harcourts Ltd, that in his experience there was likely to be interest in a cleared site but little or no interest while the church building remained.

The Council was extremely reluctant to accept an application for demolition of the church. Several meetings were held to try and resolve the matter. At one such meeting, on 20 May 2014, the Trust agreed that it would actively market the property for adaptive re-use over a period of 12 months. (In response, the Council officers indicated that they would recommend a 12-month rates 'holiday' which was subsequently granted.)

One enquiry that emerged from this marketing exercise that would have resulted in the retention of the church building was for conversion of the church property to a used car sales business. Under this scenario, the hall would have been demolished, the church would have remained, and the grounds used to display used cars for sale. The person who made the enquiry was invited to make an offer, but nothing further was heard from him. No other genuine enquiries were made.

My impression is that the Trust would have been reluctant to accept a proposal for use of the property as a car sales yard, even if the proposal involved retention of the Church, as the Trust wanted to divest itself of the property in a way that was in the best interests of Gore as a whole. A car sales yard on this site would not have been what the Trust wanted to leave as its legacy for Gore. Neither would it have been consistent with good current urban design or planning.

The experience of Harcourts in marketing the property reflected Mr Burgess's previous advice. While there was interest in a cleared site, as soon as prospective clients learned that the church was listed as a heritage structure in the Gore District Plan and understood the implications of that, they quickly lost interest in the property.

Gore is an established town, well served by many clubs and societies. For a building such as the subject property to be adapted for re-use by a community group requires

- The emergence of a new community need, AND/OR
- A requirement of an existing group for new premises, AND
- Funding – in order that the costs of upgrading and modifying the structure and adapting the building to its new use can be met in tenancy rentals.

This is an unlikely combination in a town with the population dynamics of Gore, where the population is static and ageing (the last census showed a very small decline in the population of Gore).

Mr Maxwell did consult with Jim Geddes, District Curator, Eastern Southland Gallery, Gore District Council, in June 2015 and asked him to consult with Heritage New Zealand and also with local heritage and other groups with a view to making suggestions in integrated designs or plans for the building. There was no further response from either Heritage New Zealand or Mr Geddes.

The land and building were offered (informally) to the Gore District Council itself. However, the response was to the effect that the Council itself has no need for the building and there was therefore no reason to commit public funds to its conservation.

Whilst developing the concept which is the subject of this application, Mr Maxwell undertook discussions with key potential tenants of the new building (a major trading bank, an accountant, and a solicitor) to ascertain whether they would enter into tenancies within a new building that was integrated with the existing church. They all responded that they would not entertain that option, preferring a more modern, functioning structure.

Adaptive-reuse of the building for a commercial use would have required:

- A proposal from a third party (other than the Parare Trust or the Council)
- A redevelopment scenario that met commercial criteria.

No such proposal was forthcoming. Therefore, no designs were prepared for 'adaptive reuse' of the church building. In the absence of a 'client' there was no reason to prepare a brief or carry out design work.

Adaptive re-use of the building would have had to address the following issues:

- Structural integrity. Two detailed seismic assessments were carried out, one by GM Designs (for the Parare Trust) and the other by Stevenson Brown Ltd (for the Gore District Council). GM Designs initially assessed the building to be 9 – 12% New Build Standard (NBS) but later refined that to 39.2%. Stevenson assessed the building overall at 40% NBS. This means that while the building is not deemed to be an earthquake risk, any change of use (under the Building Act) would entail structural strengthening.
- The introverted form of the building is not conducive to other uses

- The sloping floor is not amenable to uses other than theatre or ‘toast rack’ style seating, yet early discussions with Heritage New Zealand indicated that (at that point) they saw the sloping floor and pews as an important heritage feature.
- Any re-use of the building would need to address the current lack of water and sewerage connection.
- The poor thermal performance of the building because of the lack of insulation, and the difficulty of installing insulation to achieve improved thermal performance.

2. Details of the parts of the existing building that will be incorporated into the new build, together with associated plans illustrating this.

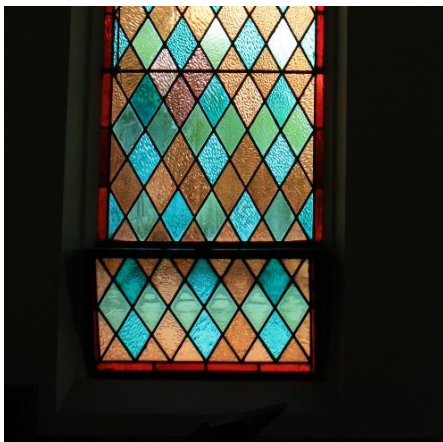
(A) Items to which the applicant is prepared to commit to incorporation within the new building:

Mr and Mrs Maxwell are prepared to **commit** to incorporating the following elements of the existing church building into the new building:

(a) The Foundation Stone – inset into the floor with resin



Figure 1



(b) A wall display in the foyer of the new building, incorporating features of the church building. This has yet to be designed. The design brief will call for a visually attractive display showing illustrations and where appropriate architectural features of the Church building,

and describing its history. One of the coloured glass windows from the original church, backlit, could be incorporated into the display. (See Figure 2).

(c) The cross feature (currently on the ridgeline) inset into the floor with resin (see Figure 3).



Figure 3

Figure 2

(B) Items which the applicant will offer for use as ‘theme’ furnishings in the proposed café:

Mr and Mrs Maxwell are prepared to offer the following for inclusion as ‘theme’ elements in the proposed café. Please note that while the applicant is willing to suggest the inclusion of all or some of these items, it would be inappropriate to make the inclusion of these items any part of any consent agreement. This is because, in order to optimise its chances of commercial success, the owners/operators of the new café will need to be free to choose the appropriate branding/theme and reflect this in the fitout. If a ‘heritage’ theme is appropriate, then there are elements of the old church building that could be incorporated into the interior décor and fitout. These are:

- Rimu sarking from the old church (where it is not affected with borer) could be incorporated in the ceiling, wall panels, and joinery. Unfortunately borer is widespread.
- Timber trusses from the roof structure could be incorporated as timber beams features in the joinery
- Rimu from the old church can be recycled into new joinery
- Pews can be incorporated into the seating arrangements (and/or the timber recycled for other



Figure 4

features such as counter tops.)

- The cast iron foundation vents from the existing church can be incorporated as decorative elements (see Figure 3).
- Doors from the church building could be incorporated into the new building.

It is important to note, however, that these suggestions will only work if the idea of a heritage theme 'resonates' with the proposed operator of the café. A regulatory approach (e.g. insisting on inclusion of such elements as a condition of consent) would be likely to result in the design response losing spontaneity and flair and in turn result in tokenism, ultimately affecting the financial performance of the café.

(C) Items from the Church building for storage and re-use elsewhere.

Mr and Mrs Maxwell are willing to store, and make available for re-use elsewhere, the following materials from demolition of the Church (where they are in a good enough condition that warrants conservation)

- Wall panelling (to dado)
- Mouldings
- Flooring
- Timber trusses
- Leadlight windows
- Doors

The bricks could be recycled if there is an end-use but they are just a standard red brick.

(D) Heritage items for use elsewhere

Mr and Mrs Maxwell

- Have already donated the silver cross back to the family who initially donated it to the church
- Have also donated the communion table for use at St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Gore
- Are happy to donate other items of church furniture if wanted for church use.

This letter should be regarded as the applicant's response to the 'Further Information' letter from the Gore District Council dated 20 April 2016.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W.J. Watt'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J Watt