

BEFORE THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 ('the Act')

AND

IN THE MATTER Of Resource Consent Application RMA/2020/2852 for the Canterbury Museum Trust Board for a comprehensive redevelopment of the Canterbury Museum complex including the Robert McDougall Gallery

BETWEEN **THE CANTERBURY MUSEUM TRUST BOARD**
Applicant

A N D **CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL**
Local Authority

EVIDENCE OF ANTHONY WRIGHT ON BEHALF OF THE CANTERBURY MUSEUM TRUST BOARD

Dated 25 MAY 2021

INTRODUCTION

- 1 My full name is Anthony Ernest Wright. I am the Director of Canterbury Museum (the Museum) and I have held this position for the past 25 years. .
- 2 I hold the qualifications of Master of Science (MSc) and Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Management (FNZIM).
- 3 I have over 40 years' experience managing and leading museums in New Zealand. In 1980 I became Curator of Botany at Auckland Museum and subsequently held numerous roles, including Acting Museum Director, before becoming the Director of Canterbury Museum in 1996.
- 4 I am Chair of Christchurch's Public Art Advisory Group, Deputy Chair of the Antarctic Heritage Trust, President of the New Zealand Botanical Society and a trustee of several science, arts and cultural trusts. I have served four terms as Chair of Museums Aotearoa.
- 5 I am authorised by the Canterbury Museum Trust Board (the Trust Board) to present this evidence in support of the Board's redevelopment proposal.
- 6 I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note (dated December 2014) and agree to comply with it. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 7 In my evidence I address the following issues:
 - (a) The current state of the Museum buildings and facilities.
 - (b) The risks to the Museum collection.
 - (c) How the proposed redevelopment will address these issues.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 8 Canterbury Museum at 154 years old is at a crossroads. Its rabbit-warren of buildings are no longer fit for museum purposes, and some of those buildings are actively contributing to the degradation of the Museum collections they should be protecting. The ability to properly welcome and provide manaakitanga to our 780,000 + visitors per year is severely compromised.
- 9 Underpinned by an extensive brief for meeting all the Museum's needs of a redevelopment, a new Building Conservation Plan covering both the built environment values and social values of the Museum, and a Ngāi Tahu gifted

Cultural Narrative, a comprehensive and remarkable schema for redevelopment of the site, is presented for consideration for granting of resource consent.

- 10 If consented and built, the Museum Board is confident that the redevelopment schema will deliver the spaces and flexibility to meet the Museum's needs for its next 50 years on this treasured site, and drive visitor numbers and engagement beyond the 1 million per year mark.

BACKGROUND

- 11 Canterbury Museum has been on the same site for 150 years; since October 1870.
- 12 It is home to nationally and internationally important objects from Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world. This includes the most significant collection of objects relating to the heroic age of Antarctic exploration and discovery and a large collection of Ngāi Tahu taonga.
- 13 More than two million items of Canterbury's heritage, its taonga (treasures), are housed or displayed at the Museum. The Museum collections have an estimated value of more than \$1 billion, but of course they are held in trust and can't be sold.
- 14 With more than 750,000 visitors a year, it is the most visited indoor tourist attraction in Te Wai Pounamu (South Island) and an important and significant contributor to the city and regional economies.
- 15 The Museum is an iconic feature of the Christchurch Cultural Precinct and the wider city. The Museum not only has the only remaining undamaged neo-Gothic buildings in the city, but also cares for the heritage-listed Robert McDougall Gallery.
- 16 Canterbury Museum is one of the country's oldest museums, but sadly the passage of time has taken a toll on its buildings.
- 17 Cracks in the buildings mean pests can get in. There's no air conditioning or insulation, which means the temperature and humidity cannot be properly controlled. The buildings leak in places when it rains and only some areas have fire sprinkler systems. These issues will only worsen over time.
- 18 The Canterbury Museum is a registered Charitable Trust, the governance of which is vested in the Canterbury Museum Trust Board, and as set out in the Canterbury Museum Trust Board Act 1993 (the Museum Empowering Act).
- 19 The Trust Board has a duty under the Museum Empowering Act to protect Canterbury's taonga, including its heritage buildings. The Trust Board is proposing a redevelopment of the Museum in response to the need to actively position and shape its future for the next 50-100 years.

20 This is not a nice to do project. This is a response to a set of challenges that threaten the future of the Museum itself as a physical structure and as an important community facility.

THE MUSEUM BUILDINGS AND ROBERT MCDOUGALL GALLERY

The Museum buildings

- 21 Canterbury Museum has been on its current site since 1870 when the first Benjamin Mountfort designed building opened to the public.
- 22 The Museum complex consists of seven separate buildings built between 1870 and 1995 that cover more than 90% of the site.
- 23 The nineteenth century heritage buildings, mirroring the Christ Church Cathedral at the other end of Worcester Boulevard, are our greatest treasures. However, Museum buildings are no longer fit for purpose as a modern, functional museum. Our twentieth century buildings in particular have been well past their use-by date for some time.

Inadequate visitor facilities

- 24 The current Museum has only:
- One small lift to move both people and the collection vertically around the building, and it often breaks down.
 - Limited toilets, well below current Building Code.
 - A single small cafe on Level 4 and a constrained retail shop in the foyer.
 - Limited welcoming spaces for visitors to gather and orient themselves.
 - A small education room that is difficult for the public to access.
 - No temperature control across most of the complex. In the peak summer season, exhibitions can be congested, and some spaces become unbearably hot and stuffy.
- 25 Our visitor facilities are stretched beyond breaking point. As well as insufficient toilets, we can not provide appropriate accessibility for physically impaired members of the community. Our facilities are ill-equipped to cope with growing number of visitors and accessibility provisions are well below current Building Code.

Inadequate facilities for storage of the Museum collection

- 26 The nineteenth century buildings were seismically strengthened in the 1990s. As a result, the Mountfort-designed buildings were amongst the only Gothic Revival buildings in the city that were not extensively damaged in the 2010/11 Canterbury

earthquakes. However, while they are safe to visit and work in, the earthquakes made several issues worse.

- 27 The earthquakes resulted in multiple non-structural micro cracks, and the aged roof and wall claddings mean several of the buildings leak. These conditions are damaging the collections.
- 28 The various collections are stored piecemeal throughout the building in 29 different stores that are congested with poor accessibility.
- 29 Unlike most museums, there is no centralised environmental control system and no way to regulate temperature and humidity in our buildings. These temperature and humidity issues are causing damage to precious artefacts, some from prehistoric times.
- 30 Internationally accepted environmental parameters for the long-term preservation of museum collection objects require:
- (a) temperatures of 18-21°C with fluctuations of no more than +/- 1°C within a 24 hour period.
 - (b) relative humidity of 45-55% with fluctuations of no more than +/- 5% within a 24 hour period.
- 31 The effects of environmental conditions outside of these parameters can include irretrievable loss through rust, shrinking, cracking, warping, loss of colour, or quite literally objects being eaten by pests.
- 32 Currently, Canterbury Museum does not have a single collection storage facility that meets the accepted standards. Seasonal changes in some stores are as much as 9°C and 40%RH with daily fluctuations up to 4°C and 25%RH. These fluctuations are exacerbated by a combination of factors, including uninsulated buildings, old and inflexible heating systems, inconsistent air circulation systems, and the absence of a centralised control and monitoring system.
- 33 The effects of the Museum's poor environmental conditions are becoming obvious. Wooden objects are cracking; bone, horn and ivory are delaminating and splitting; and metals are tarnishing. If nothing is done the collections will only deteriorate further; there are significant implications if we cannot address this situation in the near future.
- 34 The following photos illustrate items in our collection that have been damaged by poor environmental conditions.

- 35 Socket for an Adze head split



- 36 Different types of corrosion on Nigerian Bell



37 Split in West African Bowl



38 Varying temperatures and fluctuating humidity have caused splits and veneer movement across centre and onto edge.



- 39 In addition to the damage caused by an inability to control the building environment, the Museum is currently unable to protect taonga from the proven and destructive force of earthquakes. The Canterbury Earthquake series caused damage to an estimated 100,000 objects in the Museum's collection. Even with insurance settlements enabling some level of repair there was irretrievable loss of value for many items. While the Building Code Standard of 67% is appropriate for public safety, it does not protect collections.
- 40 Despite the buildings being seismically strengthened, the collections would be largely unprotected in the event of another significant earthquake.
- 41 Poor quality storage is putting our 2.3 million item collection at risk and constraining our ability to accept more items of community heritage. Many international exhibitions will not visit museums like ours due to the risk of earthquakes and the inability to protect the collections.

Costly maintenance of obsolete buildings and services

- 42 Currently bare wiring runs through corridors, and water and wastewater pipes run through collection storerooms. We spend a lot of our time patching up problems which is an inefficient use of time and financial resources.
- 43 We've delayed work for years pending a redevelopment but now we are having to expend cash reserves to maintain and patch up obsolete buildings and services.

Inadequate exhibition spaces

- 44 Our exhibition spaces are constrained by lack of services and flexibility. Currently only 1% of our collection can be displayed at any one time and some of the collection has never been seen by the public.

Inadequate hosting and education facilities

- 45 Our current foyer area is cramped making it difficult to properly welcome all our visitors and we have limited space where we can host guests and hold other special occasions.
- 46 Generations of Cantabrians have been educated at the Museum; last year almost 35,000 people (including 16,700 school students) participated in Museum delivered programmes. Another 30,200 people enjoyed public programmes at the Museum ranging from gallery tours and talks, to much-loved family favourites such as Night at the Museum and The Great Museum Santa Search.
- 47 However, we have very limited space for innovative public programmes and must hold public talks and lectures in the Bird Hall, a gallery which is ill-suited, has limited technology, no air-conditioning, plastic seating and is nowhere near the lift.

Further, our current education facilities are cramped, and we can only offer limited digital education opportunities.

- 48 Overall, the current inadequacies of the Museum buildings do not allow the Trust Board to fully achieve its functions under the Museum’s Empowering Act, and the situation will only get worse with the passage of time as the buildings deteriorate further and visitor numbers increase.

Robert McDougall Gallery

- 49 The Robert McDougall Gallery (RMG) building was opened in the 1932 and is listed as a Category 1 Place by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and is included in the schedule of historic buildings within the Christchurch District Plan. The RMG has been added to over subsequent years including a new workshop and night entry added to the back of the building in 1982 and a staff wing (Canaday Wing) in 1985.
- 50 In the late 1990’s Christchurch City Council made the decision to proceed with a new Art Gallery for Christchurch on a new site. This enabled the Museum to begin to consider the introduction of the RMG space into the wider Canterbury Museum complex.
- 51 The RMG has been vacant since 2008 when the new Art Gallery was opened and the contents of the RMG were transferred to the new site.
- 52 The building suffered minor damage in the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes and is considered earthquake prone i.e. below 34% New Building Standard (NBS) and cannot be occupied without seismic strengthening.
- 53 In 2018, CCC publicly advertised for expressions of interest in taking over the running and operation of the RMG. The Museum lodged an expression of interest with CCC and it is understood that it was the only valid expression received. The Museum has subsequently signed a 50-year lease with CCC for the RMG.
- 54 The land that the RMG building is located on is subject to a Local Act of Parliament; the Christchurch City Council (Robert McDougall Gallery) Land Act 2003 (RMG Land Act).
- 55 The RMG Land Act essentially requires that the land be used for the purpose of “a public gallery for the display of art and decorative arts and craft and ancillary activities”. In addition, the RMG Land Act allows CCC to lease the land, but only for the purposes outlined above.

THE PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

- 56 The Trust Board has developed a vision that will provide fit for purpose facilities, protect the heritage buildings, and safeguard the Museum's future. This vision is encapsulated in a comprehensive Project Brief available on the Museum website.
- 57 The proposed redevelopment is underpinned by a newly developed Building Conservation Plan (also available on the Museum's website) which address both the built and social values our community ascribes to the Museum.
- 58 We have engaged a Heritage Architect as part of our consultant design team, to provide input during all stages of the redevelopment design process, and we have worked within the guidelines of the New Zealand Historic Places Act (1993).

The Museum buildings

- 59 The proposed redevelopment celebrates the original architecture and reflects the city founders' intentions for the Museum's exterior. The proposed redevelopment will strengthen the heritage buildings and protect and restore lost features. These include the original flèche (slender spire) on the Rolleston Avenue façade and heritage chimneys.
- 60 The redevelopment includes the base isolation of all the Museum heritage buildings, the Robert McDougall Gallery, and the proposed new buildings. Base isolation is the norm for museums in other earthquake prone areas of the world.
- 61 Base isolation will bring the entire Museum facility and the RMG up to 100% of New Building Standard (NBS) for IL3 buildings. This will also protect the Museums' collection from earthquake risk.
- 62 New, fit-for-purpose facilities will attract and meet the needs of more than one million visitors (domestic and international) per year.
- 63 Redevelopment will allow modern technology to be integrated into the buildings and will bring the visitor experience into the twenty-first century and the digital age.
- 64 New exhibition space will allow us to tell more of the stories that are important to Canterbury and in a range of different ways. More space will allow us to improve the experience for our visitors and enable us to show off more of our wonderful taonga.
- 65 In addition, new purpose-built exhibition space will allow us to host major international shows that we are unable to host in the current small, inflexible, non-base isolated spaces.

66 The Redevelopment also enables the introduction of Araiteuru, a Māori 'heart' of the future Museum. Within a full-height central atrium, it will celebrate the importance of how we welcome people to the Museum and is where Ngāi Tahu will tell their stories with the assistance of Museum staff.

67 Araiteuru will be home to a new contemporary whare – Te Whare a Tahu – a ceremonial and educational space, along with the Whare Tipuna Hau Te Ananui o Tangaroa. This full sized whare and taonga, has not been on display for 64 years, and would hold pride of place in Araiteuru with Te Whare a Tahu. Originally the third heritage building to be erected on the site in 1874, Hau te Ananui was moved several times before being deconstructed and put into storage prior to the development of the 1958 Centennial Wing. A close working relationship has been developed with the Ngati Porou Potae Whanau, who support the return of the whare in the redeveloped Museum.

68 Araiteuru atrium including new contemporary Te Whare a Tahu (left) and Whare Tipuna Hau Te Ananui o Tangaroa (right).



69 One of the treasures of Canterbury Museum, the Okarito Blue Whale skeleton (26.5 metres long), requires an appropriately sized space to allow for a dynamic and exciting display of this large and important exhibit. The bones are fully conserved but not currently assembled as a whole skeleton. The proposed redevelopment will bring this amazing creature out of storage and back on display for the first time in 25 years.

70 Okarito Blue Whale skeleton on display (early 1990s) in the Garden Court



71 Proposed Museum atrium with Okarito Blue Whale skeleton on display



72 We recently acquired medals that were awarded to the great Antarctic explorer, Ernest Shackleton. These medals are currently in storage and have never been seen by the public. We will be able to share them and hundreds of other new Antarctic exhibits in a proposed greatly expanded Antarctic Gallery.

- 73 Examples of Ernest Shackleton's medals in storage.



- 74 The Museum provides a range of education and public programmes delivering significant educational benefits and opportunities. Redevelopment will mean dedicated, modern learning spaces for the thousands of school children who visit us each year so they can learn in an environment that meets today's learning needs.
- 75 Multi-purpose and flexible gathering spaces will better enable us to provide the hospitality (manaakitanga) that is appropriate for our guests.

Robert McDougall Gallery building

- 76 The integration and connection of the RMG with the Museum complex forms part of the Redevelopment Project. The McDougall allows the Museum expansion in area for exhibition and collection storage.
- 77 While the building is deficient in some practical aspects such as visitor facilities (for example the current building has no access to toilets for visitors), the redevelopment will address improving the visitor facilities, either within the building itself or immediately adjacent.
- 78 The Robert McDougall Gallery building will be returned, as far as practicable, to its original form and design. Since it was built, various additions and alterations have been made, some of which will be removed as part of uncovering original heritage fabric.
- 79 Improvement work proposed for the RMG includes:
- Earthquake strengthening to 100% NBS. This involves a combination of structural strengthening of the RMG Building, and also base isolation (the latter is required to strengthen the building over 67%).

- Building services upgrade
- Linkage into the Museum complex at both the basement and exhibition floor levels.
- Improvement of visitor facilities.
- Repair of heritage fabric.

- 80 All amendments will be undertaken with reference to the RMG Building Conservation Plan, with particular attention to retention and enhancement of original heritage elements.
- 81 The Museum Trust Board is aware of the requirements of the RMG Land Act and intends to fully comply with the requirements of the Act. To this end, the Board amended the Project Brief to clarify that the Robert McDougall Gallery would be used in a similar way to its previous use as an Art Gallery in accordance with the RMG Land Act. This decision was conveyed to Mr Seay by letter dated 14 August 2020 (refer Attachment A).
- 82 The Robert McDougall Gallery high quality exhibition spaces are ideally suited to displaying a large proportion of the Museum's art collection which is currently in storage due to lack of exhibition space.
- 83 The public spaces in the McDougall would be used in a very similar way, and with a similar ambience, to the previous use as an art gallery. These would be used as long-term flexible exhibition spaces.
- 84 The Museum will primarily display two-dimensional works of art, as provided for in the Robert McDougall Land Act.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

- 85 We have a long relationship with Ngāi Tūāhuriri and we have worked closely together to ensure the redevelopment occurs in genuine partnership with tangata whenua, rūnanga and iwi.
- 86 The Cultural Narrative they have gifted to the Museum weaves together the cultural values, traditions and history of Ngāi Tūāhuriri. It recognises the rights and guarantees provided under the Treaty of Waitangi and respects the mana of the local hapū, iwi and all peoples now resident in this land.
- 87 The proposed redevelopment is an opportunity for Ngāi Tūāhuriri to lead, inform and help design the representation of past and current Māori culture and stories on display in partnership with Museum staff.

SUBMISSIONS

- 88 Throughout 2020, the Museum ran a comprehensive stakeholder engagement and consultation process with a wide variety of stakeholders including the public. The Museum did this because it had a genuine interest in what stakeholders wanted to see in a redeveloped Canterbury Museum.
- 89 Feedback received from stakeholders across multiple workshops, and other channels was considered by the Museum and its design team and incorporated into the redevelopment concept design where deemed appropriate. Overall feedback throughout the consultation process was very positive.
- 90 When Canterbury Museum lodged the Resource Consent application it requested that the application be publicly notified. The Museum did this because it was genuinely interested in what the public thought about the proposed redevelopment. Overall, it appears that public support for the project is very high.
- 91 The Museum is however aware of two submitters who are not fully supportive of the redevelopment in its entirety. These submitters are Mr Tim Seay and the Christchurch Civic Trust.
- 92 Both Mr Seay and Christchurch Civic Trust were part of the stakeholder engagement process throughout 2020.
- 93 Mr Seay and the Christchurch Civic Trust have expressed some concerns in their submissions that relate to:
- The storage of the Museum’s collection in a basement below the water table (both)
 - The Museum’s proposed use of the RMG (Mr Seay).
- 94 The Museum Trust Board and its management team are cognisant and very aware of its obligations as they relate to:
- (a) the requirements of Museum’s Empowering Act regarding the need to preserve and maintain the Museum’s collection in good order, and
 - (b) the requirements of the RMG Empowering Act regarding limitations on the use of the RMG building.
- 95 The Museum has thanked Mr Seay and the Christchurch Civic Trust for their involvement in the consultation process and for their submissions.
- 96 The Museum has arranged to meet with Mr Seay and Civic Trust on 31 May 2021. The purpose of this meeting is for the Museum’s technical design consultants to provide Mr Seay and the Civic Trust the opportunity to better understand the proposed measures that will keep the Museum’s collection safe while stored below ground.

97 While the Museum believes these matters to be outside of the Resource Consent application parameters, the Museum has assured Mr Seay and the Civic Trust that it intends to fully comply with the requirements of both Empowering Acts.

CONCLUSION

98 The first Canterbury Museum buildings were constructed in 1870, and the complex has been added to regularly right up until the mid 1990's.

99 While the nineteenth century buildings are considered our greatest taonga, the twentieth century buildings are now well past their use by date and are no longer fit for purpose. Redevelopment of the Museum is now essential to meet the requirements of the Empowering Act going forward.

100 The Museum Trust has carefully developed a concept design for a redeveloped Museum in consultation with a broad group of stakeholders including the public, and in partnership with mana whenua.

101 The proposed redevelopment will safeguard the heritage buildings and the Museum's collection through seismic strengthening and base isolation bringing the complex up to 100% NBS, along with the inclusion of international standard environmental controls and security.

102 The redevelopment will enhance the visitor experience, providing local, domestic and International visitors, along with school students, access to twenty first century facilities, and enable the display and enjoyment of a significantly larger portion of the collection.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my evidence.

Anthony Wright



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14 August 2020

Tim Seay
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By Email: tpseay@farmside.co.nz

Dear Mr Seay

Submission on Project Brief for Proposed Museum Redevelopment

Thank you for your submission to the Board on the inclusion of the Robert McDougall Gallery in the Project Brief for the proposed redevelopment of Canterbury Museum which was received at the Board meeting held on Monday, 10 August.

The Board acknowledges your position with respect to the Gallery and understands the reasons you wish the building to remain with the Council.

On behalf of the Museum I wish to apologise that the proposals for the Museum's future use of the Robert MacDougall Gallery had not been updated in the published Project Brief to reflect the current position outlined to you by the Director.

The Board considered this particular matter on Monday and approved the replacement of the wording on page 29 of the brief with the wording attached at Appendix A. The Project Brief on Museum's website is soon to be updated with this wording.

I can assure you that the Board is mindful of the wishes of your grandfather, Robert McDougall, in making the generous gift of the Gallery to the citizens of Christchurch.

We are committed to honouring his wishes and believe that the Museum offers the best opportunity for the Gallery to be reopened and maintained for public use for the display of works from the city's heritage art collections – both on loan from the Christchurch Art Gallery as well as from the Museum's art collection.

With kind regards
Yours sincerely

David Ayers
Chairman

Appendix A

Robert McDougall Gallery at Canterbury Museum

The Robert McDougall Gallery high quality exhibitions spaces would be used in a very similar way, and with a similar ambience, to the previous use as an Art Gallery. These would be used as long-term flexible exhibition spaces.

The Christchurch City Council (Robert McDougall) Land Act 2003, which defines the use of this space, specifically notes that the gallery is for ‘the purpose of a public gallery for the display of art and decorative arts and crafts and ancillary activities’.

The Museum has an extensive heritage art collection suitable for display in the Robert McDougall Gallery, and is able to borrow further works from the Christchurch Art Gallery heritage art collection to display.

The Museum will primarily display two-dimensional works of art, as provided for in the Robert McDougall Land Act.