
Subject: RE: No 3

Commenting on Founders

Founders is Our History

Option 3

I feel sad that it's been left for So Long

Regards Fiona

Subject: The Future we Choose

Thinking of our children's future let's replace Founders Theater with a special block of trees. These would all be just one carefully chosen species. There would be a plaque saying 'Planted for Our Children'. Seniors would plant them as a commitment to adaptation to climate and the coming biggest changes our planet has ever seen. Maybe a well spaced block of kowhai trees so people could walk freely around them.

This comes to mind after reading the latest climate book, The Future we Choose by Christina Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac. The authors were involved with the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement by 195 nations. Since 2016 I have read 11 city library books on climate change. This is the 5th climate book I have bought myself and it is the most inspiring I have read ever.

Martin Toop

Subject: Founders Theatre Submission

To Hamilton City Council,

I support the demolition of Founders Theatre. The land should be used as a community park, with a high-quality destination playground included (at the level of the Margaret Mahy playground in Christchurch). The playground could have a theatrical theme, ensuring the Founders Theatre legacy continues to the next generation.

Apartment and other high-density living in Hamilton's CBD needs to be encouraged and incentivised by Hamilton City Council. This park will provide further shared amenity for those living in our CBD, and will attract people to our CBD on weekends and during school holidays, creating further vibrancy and a family-friendly environment.

Kind regards,
Jamie Strange MP

Subject: Letter Re. Founder's Theatre Consultation redevelopment.

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached a letter from Hon David Bennett regarding tomorrow's meeting on Founder's Theatre.

Warm Regards,

Matt Horsfield

Parliamentary MP Support

Hamilton East Electorate-David Bennett MP



Hon David Bennett

MP for Hamilton East

16 September 2020

Mayor Paula Southgate
Hamilton City Council
Private Bag 3010
Hamilton 3240

Dear Paula,

We note that Hamilton City Councillors will meet tomorrow, September 17 to discuss a report recommending further community consultation on options relating to the future of the Founders Theatre site.

This is a great opportunity to look at developing a world class facility that would benefit Hamilton for the next fifty years. The Western Town Belt is already home to an existing sporting precinct with facilities such as FMG Stadium and Seddon Park which both regularly hold international sporting events.

We suggest that the current Founders Theatre site be rezoned as a Major Sporting Zone. This would be in line with the current Major Facility Zone located at FMG Stadium and Seddon Park and well as the Sports and Recreation Open Space Zone where Hinemoa Park and Hamilton Squash and Tennis is located. This would be a modern concept of a sporting precinct akin to what exists in cities like Melbourne.

We would encourage Hamilton City Council to select Option 2 to remove Founders Theatre and allow the ability to re-develop the site and develop it into a world class sporting facility. This would create a long-term valuable asset for Hamilton that could hold regional and international events and bring significant economic benefit to our city.

Regards,

David Bennett

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

HAMILTON EAST ELECTORATE

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Subject: Re: The future for the Founders Theatre site

Thanks Sean, I imagine option 2 is where it will go. I really just had an idea to retain the existing building and turn it into "Photography world" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1128777513847615> - I don't have a business plan or funding :)

Cheers, Desmond.

Desmond Downs

Subject: Founders site.

We vote a multi-purpose community park in your reply to the letter you sent us.

Thanks

Yvette H

Salon Coordinator

Subject: Retaining Founders Theater

Hi Jennie,

I am in favour of retaining the Hamilton Founders Theater.

I 100% support the findings report by Mr Andrew Byyder and are applaud at the dishonesty of the CEO Richard Briggs and Council members who supported his action.

In this controversy and others including the removal of the statue of Cpt Hamiltons is a step to far by this CEO and I would endorse his removal from his post for being dishonest and incompetent in his present position with the rate payers of Hamilton.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Subject: Founders Theatre Option- "Hamilton Founders Universal Market"

(The cat stepped on the keyboard, so resending as the previous email disappeared- or sent...he too has a sense of humour)

I have long thought this site and building would be a great venue for a permanent 4 or 5 day Up Market venue.

(yep..sorry, another longish story, but hope the thought gets you a bit excited)

I would call it the "Hamilton Founders Universal Market" a market which would accomodate all People, Products, Created artworks, Manufactured and Hand Crafted boutique goods.... including space for recycled preloved. Vintage and Second Hand goods.... etc.

All very well presented of course which is a must.. and because it could be a permanent 5 day outlet, makes it possible to do instead of the task of uplifting packing up, goods would remain for each stall, for as long as required...especially for those who would like to make this space their own small business opportunity. Including a start up opportunity for gifted beneficiaries, who haven't had the chance to develop and nurture their internal creativity out in the real world.

There are a lot of people with gifts and talents which have been going to waste for years..they say, if you don't use it you lose it. I would like to help harvest those who haven't had the chance to be recognised, because it's hard to identify what gifts and talents are within, looking at someone at face value. Winz would never ask a person about their hidden ability, because it's not the direction they perceive or notice in a client. I would like to see them get the nudge, to help it grow and develop.

Some of the problems with 9am -to 1.30pm Markets, for some people today can be space weather distance travel age and physical ability etc, (lifting and lugging) and for those who have diligently supported them have done so for many years. But due to limited times and space or locations, it isn't too easy for many. Here, the idea of making a central venue that appeals to all groups and ages, means they can continue to do it to help keep the local heart of the city community abuzz with colourful shopping with entertaining experiences and opportunities on both sides.

The heartbeat is stronger in an active thriving body, given the right space and flow.

Many years ago, I established a 4 day market in Hood St, which was well received and open Wednesday to Saturday ..meaning the stallholders could set and dress their stalls, leaving them set up so just coming in each day...so there was no tiresome packing up and unpacking. This is the hard part with markets and as the resilient stallholders age, the fetching and carrying becomes really difficult...(me Too)

In Hood St Market, there was a basic framework structure built for each space which the stall holders could build on, then dress with their differing talents and styles of display. It was good, and some stalls joined with each other. We had a great collection of very talented creative people, even a gifted tattooist who all became reasonably well known in the community for their talents.

Not saying to be open 7 days a week, as specific areas can be set aside for those preferring to spend more time..and less for people with limited time, but for all the cultures we now have in our city, plus stall holders who've created good arts and crafts for many years, it has become a form of continued brain activity and a great way of continued socialising with a cross section with many others in the region. (I'm one of those)

As we age more, we have accumulated a huge volume of ideas and talents to share, including wisdom, because we have continued to grow our minds, that's what being creative does...plus helps keep you youthful and useful!!!... there's a lot of knowledge to also be shared.

Looking at the young and old carvers of Pounamu, bone and wood, they are keeping a part of their culture and history alive.

With this being a Universal Market, some of the outside areas could be for weekend and distant stall holders and entertainment including Drama and Musicians Stilt walkers etc. (yeah, I'm dreaming...but at least I have vision..) even roving art exhibitions.

By following all the rules, and regulations, it would make it a secure and thriving pulse to grow and add volume, entertainment and generate an exciting venue for many to enjoy in the coming years, helping get people back on their feet, given all that has been going down in recent times. Also, reinvigorating those who have given up for lack of a perfect permanent environment. (me too)

As I have done this before, being a bit of an entrepreneur, I can visualise the Founders being a perfect site for those who also have a vision to create a buzzing thriving pulse in this part of the city. Uniting a great mix of community members throughout the region.

If it is done well, safe and with precision, keeping to the rules it could be fantastic... just planting a seed of thought here for the like minded and others with great potential as ink, pen, paper and technology is not the only medium for communication.

There are people who make things happen, there are people who watch things happen, and there are people who wonder what happened. To be successful, you need to be a person who makes things happen. ~James Lovell (or instead of waiting for something to happen)

In past years New Zealanders were well known for making things happen, whether, building painting or creating something, because the desire was within..if you want it ...you can make it, ironically many Americans used to make the comment to me.. how adaptable and clever we were, as most created goods were also very entertaining and useful. (me...going back quite a few years here)

I've long believed, if you can't find a Job.. you can make one... and there are a lot of very gifted people in NZ Aotearoa who are keen to grow new memories for generations to come, getting the gifted back into their hearts, hands and brains... working together..

..And... with the building, things only fall apart if you let them...so here I'm just sharing, another possibility and a revenue source for all... including the building and site owners...HCC

Kind regards
Cheryl

Subject: Option 3 Founders' Theatre Proposal: the retention of the Founders facility in a repurposed form

Greetings Margaret / Mark / Martin (eminems)

thanks for the interactions with you all today (sorry missed your real time Martin) .

I have only accumulated my focus recently hence the late charge so to speak. If we don't make the effort, its too easy to let things slide, but in this case it is too important for us collectively not use our energies to see a better solution for the problems we often need to counteract.

I effectively herald my interest in the retention of the Founders facility in a repurposed form that is both community focussed, not excessively expensive but moves our special city into the next era with opportunities for continued national and international support.

I do not have the resources to put a proposal together so am relying on a community focussed proposal that can honour the intentions of the Founders with a view to the next 50 years. As a Grandfather now - I have a vested interest in provision of the best facilities and opportunities possible for them and their contemporaries.

The Studio Bell link is worth looking at (in the attachment below) to glean some of the enthusiasm I have developed for an equivalent opportunity for our community and nation.

Kind regards

Neil Bruce

FOUNDERS OPTION 3

Proposal – A Repurposed Founders: A Centre for Community, Cultural and Performing Arts: History and Innovation

Neil Bruce

Founder and life member of Hamilton Community Men's Shed, Neil has followed a professional career in Music and Music Education with practical DIY interests in instrument making and playing. In 2003, as a diversion from music, Neil completed a Ph.D from the University of Waikato where he researched Driver Education for Adolescents following his involvement in a fatal head on collision in 1993. As Chair of the Society for Music Education and Musical Director of the "Hamilton Community Centre of Music" 1991-2006, Neil expanded the group music tuition scheme from primary students to include classes for preschool, secondary school and adult students. As the Marimba Man he also offered courses, tuition, adult night classes and marimba construction for schools in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty.



As a former Community Education Director (Melville High School) and Community Advisor (University of Waikato), Neil is convinced that the power of the creative and performing arts goes largely untapped and unrealized. Artists have vital contemporary roles to challenge erroneous perceptions, to help people reflect and learn from the past, to heal the broken hearted, and to entertain. They are also beacon innovators for the future.

In this regard, Neil has written music and songs – as yet unpublished – and constructed art works. Known as "HURs (different from Hymns). HURs "Help Us Reflect" on the social issues and mental health concerns that appear resistant to change. Rather than letting them simmer away, or being someone else's problem to fix, artists need to take action say "enough is enough".

Neil is passionate and encourages people to act now and together. When citizens work tirelessly together, they can "wake the sleeping giant" and achieve change. Ordinary people and citizens of this community must drive this social change and elected officials need to listen to their voices.

A perspective on Repurposing the FOUNDERS' THEATRE : OPTION 3

In this regard, having observed the way issues can stay on back burners for years, (trapped by bureaucratic hoops and hurdles) we collectively need to become solutionists – and take the bull by the horns and find the best solution for everyone.

Reviewing previous submissions and Expressions of Interest for retaining the Founders' Theatre (Dec 2017), a majority felt that retention and refurbishment of the Founders' Theatre was expedient. I am significantly of this opinion with relevant points below.

Given that

- Momentum has since materialized with an alternative theatre plan for the City Centre, there exists a golden opportunity for citizens to secure the existing building for the longterm benefit of the community.
- Repurposing an existing facility is already “shovel ready”

The key questions then have to be

- What are the needs of the community not being met now?
- What could be done with the existing facility that serves those ends and more?

OPTION 3



OPTION 3

Create something new from the theatre building and area around it

We are inviting submissions with funding proposals from interested parties for a potential third option that partly or fully retains the Founders Theatre building for an alternative purpose. Estimates to restore the building range from \$12M to \$20M.

Key features include:

- 1 Building (partly or fully) and surrounding spaces retained (e.g. car park, areas of lawn, garden and vegetation).
- 2 Dame Hilda Ross Memorial Fountain repaired and activated.

Share your voice online or by filling in a form from your local library or our central city offices. You will have the opportunity to share your ideas through our Hearings and Engagement Committee. Council will consider the future for the Founders site through the Long-Term Plan process.

Find out more at hamilton.govt.nz/founders

I suggest that the Founders Site become the **A Centre for Community, Cultural and Performing Arts: History and Innovation** (or an equivalent hub for the benefit of all citizens regardless of age, origin, gender or belief system).

Such a repurposing could complement Hamilton's already International accolades for

- it's Garden's Projects,
 - it's Centres for high performance and innovation,
 - it's recent status as New Zealand's Most Beautiful City,
 - it's centre for Maori Culture and Taonga Puoro
 - it's central geographical proximities to other main centres
1. Acknowledging historical elements of development and culture, it should also be actively involved in innovation – attracting both national and international interest (in addition to serving the everyday needs of the ratepayers and citizens).
 2. Gaps in NZ music / history / performers / instruments could be addressed.
 - a. In Barcelona, Nice and Calgary, they have national music instrument museums that are active practical enterprises.
 - b. New Zealand has no comprehensive dedicated Museum of Musical Instruments and performers. This is a unique opportunity.
 - c. In Calgary <https://www.studiobell.ca> Studio Bell is the centre for the celebration of Canadian Music and Musicians. The Founders Theatre could become an equivalent entity. It is "Shovel Ready" the facilities are there for an immediate launch. The scope is only to dream about.
 3. The WORLD OF WEARABLE ARTS was launched in a small centre (Nelson) and had to be moved to cater for a bigger and more comprehensive centre for the national and international interests.
 - a. Just as the field days puts the Waikato on the National Agricultural Map, the FOUNDERS facility could promote / coordinate the first WORLD OF SONIC PURSUITS (WOSP) in New Zealand along WOWA lines. This would require the buy in from the University of Waikato, Wintec, and Local / Regional Wananga. Hirini Melbourne's musical works exploring traditional Māori Musical Instruments were centred at the University of Waikato.

The nature of repurposing should not incur exorbitant expenditure and the scope outlined above could invite new investment by strategic planning.

In summary, since 1993 I have focused on my own personal development and have created a number of original HURs (Art / Music) responses to social events that help us to focus on positive solutions.

For example, In response to MARCH 15 Massacre 2019, using the word MUSLIM as a catalyst for a musical theme, I created an anthem for healing "We are one together" which explores the need for us as a world and a nation to continue to reach for the unattained together in unity – Kotahitanga.

Lyrics:

We are one together, together one,
Kotahi Tatou, Tatou Katoa,
Let's reach for our dreams,
Where love and life our themes,
Healing all that's been,
Together as a team,
We are one together, together one,
Kotahi Tatou, Tatou Katoa.



Such an original portfolio of works could be fittingly launched from this refurbished

Centre for Community, Cultural and Performing Arts: History and Innovation

Having discussed my ideas today with Mark Bunting (Hamilton City Council), Sue Trodden (Orchestras Central), and Margaret Evans, (TOTI Trust), I can see natural synergies being recognized and celebrated through this project so am happy for these ideas to be incorporated into a refurbished /repurposed community hub concept. I do not have the time to independently document the required support.

I would like to do some form of presentation to advance the project to the next stage.

Let's do something creative, sustainable and innovative together NOW.



Subject: Founders Theatre Submission

Dear Martin,

I am deeply concerned at the approach taken by Council staff to orchestrate a specific Number 2 outcome for the future of the existing Founders site in favour of other options.

This is a dirty trick that is designed to ignore the direction given by council and prevent the community from having a valid say in the future of this site and does not bode well for democracy and enhanced community engagement promised to voters at the last election. We could say we have been deceived into voting for a democracy principal that no-one had the intention of carrying out.

In attempting to submit my support for the TOTI approach to repurposing Founders the council website does not allow me as an individual to carry out this wish and in doing so denies the community from expressing its democratic right as an individual to express an opinion.

The dirty trick goes deeper, in that the staff preferred option 2 has no costs associated with it. If one voted for this, the voter is giving an open cheque book approval to proceed. This is highly irregular, exposing the ratepayer to even higher rate demands than the unsustainable average 100% increase over 10 years adopted in the 2018 long term plan.

Furthermore, the cost of achieving option 2 could be greater than the restoration proposed by TOTI. Again an inappropriate approach to enhancing Hamilton city and the regions amenities.

I have attached some documents prepared by TOTI and others that demonstrate the need for a well researched and funded future for Founders. To deny this option is irresponsible and destroying a high profile community funded asset in this way will in my opinion have serious consequences.

I wish to speak to Option 3.

Regards
Raymond Mudford

Founders Theatre demolition vs Re-Use: Unanswered Questions???

I make this submission in support of any group seeking to retain all or part of the existing building. I have reviewed the documents used by the council to close the theatre in 2016.

These were obtained by an Official Information Act request. I note the following key points from the various reports. These points raise questions that I think most ratepayers would agree, need answering before any decision to demolish Founders Theatre is made.

FLY TOWER

2014 Shand Shelton Report

- This is the compliance and safety report. It identifies a handful of shortcomings in the fly system, but does not recommend closure of the theatre.
- Page 22 gives a cost to fix the fly system of \$116,350+GST.

2016 February Securias Safety audit

- Page 4 notes most of the items in Shand report have already been fixed.
- Securias is not an engineer.
- Because the fly tower has not been certified by an engineer, it is deemed to be an “unknown” risk.
- Instead of getting an engineer to certify the structure, Securias decides that “unknown” = very high risk.
- The simple fact that the fly tower has been used for 54 years without failure does not seem to be taken into consideration?
- Research from the University of Florence in Italy regarding historic timber structures shows that wood strength does not decline with age.
- There is no indication in the report that risk has increased.
- Securias recommends the fly tower is not used until engineering certification.

Closure on 1 March 2016

- Richard Briggs announced the closure of the theatre due to the fly system.
- Given what is said in the actual report, this appears to be a the result of a lack of understanding of the process and an insufficient questioning of the report?
- There is no record of any attempt to get an engineer to certify the fly system??

2016 March PWC report

- Page 6 item 1 relates to the fly tower: “If the current wooden frame can be certified then a safe working load could be established and the system continue to be used.”
- The issue here is that HCC engaged Securias who did not have the expertise or experience in working with wooden structures to certify it. An experienced engineer may be able to certify the wooden frame. The question for me is why was this not done.

My Conclusion as an Architect based upon the Data

- The immediate closure appears to be a poor decision.
- There was no need to close the Theatre long term.
- Engaging the correct expert is likely to have allowed certification to re-open.

EARTHQUAKE (SEISMIC) STRENGTH

2016 February Dunning Thornton Engineers Seismic Report

- Site visit November 2015
- Initial assessment only – not a detailed report. Recommends further investigation.
- Proposes upgrade but state that “structures are very reusable”
 - “overall the existing building is fairly robust and adaptable for its age”
- Recommends seismic upgrade in 5 -10 years.
- The report does not recommend closure.

2016 March PWC report

- Page 4 item C (1): “The seismic performance of the building is not currently known.”
- However, page 6 item (1) states seismic performance of “56% of NBS”.
- 33% is the legal minimum requirement.
- Refers to Dunning Thornton report and implies the decision to close the building is due to seismic concerns – “Until a DSA (Detailed Seismic Analysis) is undertaken...”
- This appears to contradict public statements by Richard Briggs?

2016 July Dunning Thornton Detailed Seismic Report

- DT is based in Wellington.
- Page 4 raises shortcomings in the available information, such as HCC not having a complete set of original drawings to show structural connections.
- Any local engineer would have known where to get the original drawings. It took me a 5-minute phone call to track them down.
- This leads to the central question of ‘why was a Wellington firm was chosen’?
- Page 17 recommends further investigation due to this missing information.
- Recent discussions with DT and the now-available original drawings confirms a different result would have been obtained.
- DT did not recommend closure. In fact, DT assumed refurbishment would be carried out.
- DT notes on page 17 that there would be 12 ½ year window under current legislation to carry out strengthening work.

COST ESTIMATES

2016 Founders Theatre Redevelopment

- This is the source of the \$20m cost to restore the building, as quoted by Andrew King.
 - The \$20m is not the cost to restore, but to carry out massive upgrades to equal a new building capable of hosting the latest and largest shows. It includes a new function room as well.
 - The cost to continue using the theatre “as is” was not provided.

Discussions with engineers

- Local engineers have estimated seismic strengthening to “far above the legal requirement” to be around \$1m.

CONCLUSION

- There was no structural need to close the theatre.

- Strengthening may not even be necessary, and in any case, can be completed cheaply to well above the legal requirement.
- There is a 12 ½ year timeframe to do strengthening if required.

FIRE RISK

- 2014 Shand Shelton report notes concerns about the fire curtain.
- 2016 Securias report does not identify the fire curtain as a high risk.
- 2016 PWC report notes that the building complies with current legislation, including the fire curtain.
- Replacing the fire curtain would be sensible in any upgrade and relatively inexpensive with modern systems.
- There was no fire risk sufficient justify to closing the theatre.

BUILDING USEFUL LIFE

- Several reports claim the building is “near the end of its useful life” because it is over 50 years’ old.
- In my view this is nonsense. Many useful buildings are much older.
- It is a misunderstanding of two factors:
 - The Building Act requires buildings to be designed for a minimum of 50 years.
 - Accounting depreciation is carried out over 50 years.
- Neither of these relate to a useful lifespan or suggest a limit of 50 years.

COUNCIL ERRORS

Council has published documents and web pages that contain factual errors and statements which could be seen as misleading to the public.

These include:

- “The Founders Theatre flying system was considered unsafe for the loads it was carrying, so the building was closed.”
 - The flying system safety was considered “unknown” by Securias. There was no evidence that it was unsafe. PWC stated that if certification was obtained, the fly system could continue to be used.
- “The building is also earthquake-prone”.
 - Due to the limitations stated in the DT reports, failure to carry out the recommended further investigations, and previous reports by G.A. Hughes Ltd, it cannot be stated with certainty that the building is earthquake prone.
- “cost to restore it has been estimated at \$12M to \$20M.”
 - These figures do not relate to a restoration. They relate to a refurbishment, upgrades, extensions, and additional functions.
- “the majority of our community told us they would prefer Council to invest in a new theatre”
 - The majority of the community did not tell you this. The Hamilton community is over 160,000 people. You did not receive over 80,000 responses. You received feedback from a tiny minority.
- Council staff have confirmed to me that it is council policy to make corrections when informed of errors. Given the current public consultation, I expect corrections to be made promptly.

RE-USE

The Founders Theatre is suitable for re-use for a wide range of activities, including the performing arts. Theatre Of The Impossible has a proposal that is a positive re-use. I support their proposal.

Andrew Bydder

For More Information please refer to:

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-city/artsandculture/founders-theatre/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/AgendasAndMinutes/20160331%20-%20Council%20Meeting%20-%20Open%20Agenda%20-%2031%20March%202016.pdf>

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/AgendasAndMinutes/Ordinary%20Council%20Agenda%20-%20Open%20-%2029%20September%202016.pdf#page=15>

<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/AgendasAndMinutes/20171212%20-%20Council%20Open%20Agenda%20-%2012%20December%202017.PDF#page=110>

https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-city/artsandculture/founders-theatre/Documents/7674%20160706%20R01%20Seismic%20Assessment%20Report_with%20appendix.pdf



Tō Tī - Your spirit
Tō Tā - Your creativity
Tō Toi - Your art

Neil G. Curgenven
History Advocate



9 July 2020

Submission to Hamilton City Council Draft Annual Plan 2020-2021

Halls of Heritage

We wish to advise the Council of our interest in rehabilitating and converting Founders Theatre into a multi-purpose public space, a Town Hall for Arts, Culture and Heritage, to include galleries and community rooms, in a community process and in accordance with current building regulations and other relevant legal requirements.

Our vision is to retain heritage architectural features and develop both the interior and exterior space to offer Hamilton and the Waikato a central facility for community activities and exhibitions, second to none.

This would NOT be as a theatre, and therefore would NOT compete with the proposed new regional theatre (nor the other city theatres). The intention is to provide affordable facilities to a wide range of groups, a public meeting space in a heritage environment and sited in a beautiful and easily accessible green belt. This will augment public opportunities to present, participate and engage in heritage, arts and cultural activities.

We are currently working with a range of heritage, building and construction professionals and are confident a cost-effective proposal will emerge. We have access to recent council reports.

Our working group asks Council to include this project in this Annual Plan with the requirement that we present a Business Plan for inclusion in the 2021 Long-Term Council Plan, to include a formal 'costed' proposal, and that the council undertake no activities that would prejudice the project.

This is another INSPIRATIONAL POST-COVID sustainable community project and will create short-term and long-term jobs

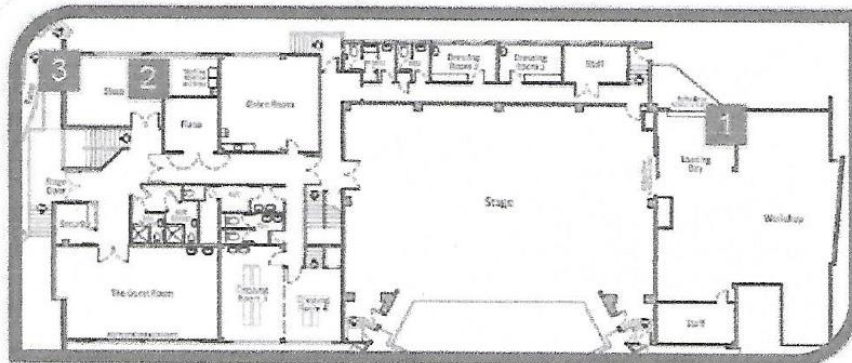
Margaret Evans
TOTI



Neil Curgenven



Attachments – extracts from Hamilton City Council Reports in 2016...includes building footprint and comments... to assist new councillors.



The present back of house is adequate in size. Since it was constructed, the spaces have been adapted and repurposed to accommodate additional production requirements; however, these changes have led to compromises with the use and layout of these areas, as follows:

- There are challenges unloading vehicles because of the configuration of the dock. It only services one vehicle at a time, is open to the weather and only has a limited amount of storage for crates and equipment whilst unloading (see 1).
- The technical spaces are co-located. This causes production inefficiencies and security issues around equipment.
- The laundry/wardrobe area shares space used for the storage, testing and repair of electronic equipment and is not a dedicated "wet area" (see 2). This situation poses risks of water ingress into the electrical equipment if water overflows.
- The dressing rooms by benchmark standards are adequate but need to be maintained in size and amenity.
- Wheelchair access is possible to the ground floor only which does not comply with requirements for a modern building (see 3).
- There are no VIP dressing rooms or dedicated orchestral or choral rooms.

2.2.4. The auditorium

The auditorium is fan shaped on one floor, with 554 seats at the front in the stalls and 695 in the circle. The issues with the auditorium can be divided into three categories – those that are related to the structure, those that relate to wear and tear, those that are integral to the building design.

Structural issues

Dunning Thornton Consultants conducted an initial engineering assessment of the building to assess its structural strength and seismic resistance, and significant issues were identified the

auditorium and its roof. The auditorium roof diaphragm¹⁴ is an essential part of a theatre's seismic resistance and is almost absent in the existing building. The issues are:

- The front wall of the auditorium is extremely robust at the upper levels, its seismic resistance is compromised by the large number of openings at ground floor level.
- It is very likely that the capacity of the side walls is significantly less than the trigger levels for an earthquake-prone building.

The engineers believe a detailed analysis should be undertaken and encourage a retrofit scheme to be undertaken as soon as is practicable.

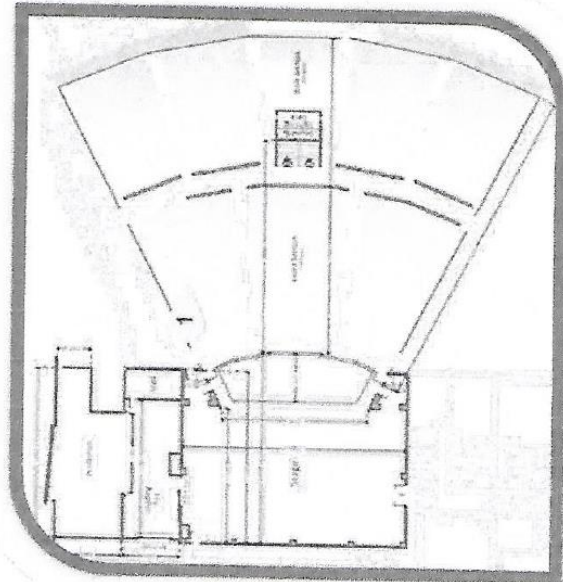
Age and condition of the infrastructure

There are a number of issues related to the age and condition of the infrastructure:

- The ceiling materials are becoming delaminated and stained. There is visible evidence of leaks, which are bowing the surface and producing holes.
- Some of the wall lining panels are loose and vibrate at certain music frequencies. Those not in need of repair or replacement require decoration.
- The seats were last replaced in 1992, and are almost 25 years old. Since then, they have been recovered but the mechanisms are worn in places and the end of row lights are broken. Patrons complain that they are uncomfortable.
- The carpet is at the end of its functional life and is due for replacement.

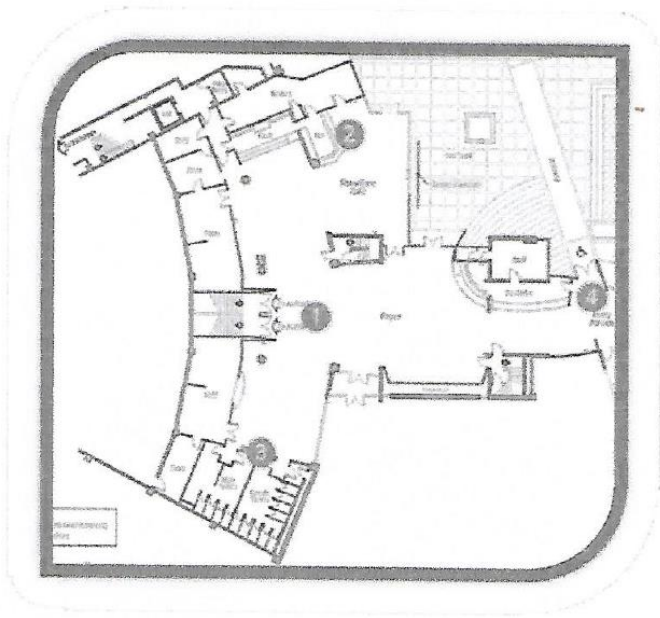
Design issues

There are some challenges with the acoustic environment, which are largely linked to the original design of the Theatre:



¹⁴ In structural engineering, a diaphragm is a structural element that transmits lateral load to the vertical resisting elements of a structure (such as shear walls or frames).

- The acoustic performance varies depending on the location of the seat.
- The building has issues with its external sound rejection, so audiences can hear external sounds. For example, when it rains heavily the sound on the rain hitting the roof can be heard and is intrusive.
- When an orchestra plays on stage it is difficult for them to hear themselves playing, because the sound is lost in the fly tower above stage or absorbed by the stage drapes, and is therefore not reflected back to the players or out to the audience.



The sight lines for patrons on the edges of the seating blocks of the Theatre are also compromised as they are not able to see parts of the stage.

2.2.5. The foyer and surrounds

The foyer is dated, shabby, inefficiently uses space and cannot be used flexibly; however, it is the site of the Ralph Hotere mural.

The key issues for the foyer area are:

- The external entrance to the Theatre is small and confusing and does not present an identifiable face to the community (see 4);
- Access to the auditorium is limited to one entrance that causes a bottle neck of patrons entering and exiting the Theatre (see 1). *"It's too crowded. The doors don't open till the last minute and you get pushed and shoved."* *"Crowded entrance and ticketing was hard to get to"* (Source: Residents survey 2013)
- The toilet facilities are inadequate. The decoration has not been updated since it was built, there are insufficient pans for women and there is no hot water. In the 2013 residents' survey there was scathing feedback on the lack of hot running water in the toilets, aged decor and uncomfortable seats. *"It's a sad place sometimes, with cold water in the toilets - good God, what century are we in."*
- Access to the food and beverage concessions is difficult (see 2) which puts limits on what patrons can spend and their ability to enjoy refreshment *"very slow service at the bar"* (Source: Residents survey 2013)

Subject: Submission on the future of Founders Theatre

Please find attached my submission on the future of the Founders Theatre.

I have chosen to submit in this separate email as the consultation process does not allow for my chosen option.

Thank you

Lynette Williams

3 November 2020

Jennie Lavis, Hamilton City Council

Email: jennie.lavis@hcc.govt.nz

Dear Jennie

SUBMISSION ON FUTURE OF FOUNDERS THEATRE HAMILTON

Please find below my submission on the proposed future of the Founders Theatre. I have been a resident of Hamilton from 1952 to 1972, and a resident and ratepayer from 1997 to the present. I am a Waikato heritage consultant, which includes being engaged in providing consultancy on Hamilton and Waikato's built heritage and writing a thematic overview history of Hamilton. I thank the Council for the opportunity to provide this feedback.

I have chosen to submit in this separate email as the consultation process does not allow for my chosen option.

I support **Option 3 but with the inclusion of the multi-purpose park aspect of Option 2, the retention of the theatre building and a combined ownership/funding model of council and community lessees.**

1. Option 3 can include modified Option 2, with the important difference of retaining the Founders Theatre – the options need not be mutually exclusive. Retaining, repairing and strengthening Founders Theatre will still allow for redevelopment and improvement of the whole site as a multi-purpose community park suitable for events, community activities and informal recreation. An outdoor performance space and public art would be complemented by the use of the theatre building for related indoor activities. Public art is already established within the foyer of the theatre - a specially-commissioned large mural by Ralph Hotere, which adds to the cultural and historic significance of the building. Other artworks could be installed to further enhance the building's cultural status.

2. The theatre can be reinstated as a community venue or town hall where events, community activities and informal recreation combine and intersect with the surrounding park. Hamilton lacks a town hall-type venue and this would be a valuable addition for a growing city. The Founders Theatre was Hamilton's town hall from 1962 until 2016. It has been the venue for a wide range of civic, cultural, entertainment, community, social and political events as well as major school activities such as prize-givings and massed choir performances. Hamilton has no other building performing all the functions required of a town hall and theatre at all levels.

3. By council's own admission in the several documents supplied as part of the consultation process:

- A review of the report undertaken by Richard Knott Limited shows that his assessment concluded the building does have heritage significance and is worthy of District Plan Heritage Schedule ranking B. The information given in the FAQ, that the

professional assessment gave the building a moderate ranking “not enough for protected status”, is incorrect and could well have negatively influenced the feedback people have given on this consultation. The theatre holds considerable cultural significance for the community. The Founders Theatre including its landscape and fountain is a historic place and worthy of scheduling in the Hamilton City District Plan. It remains unclear why the Founders Theatre has not been scheduled by Hamilton City Council as a heritage item based on this assessment.

- “Any future activity on the site will contribute to economic wellbeing. A good outcome for this space that improves the liveability of Hamilton, particularly the central city, will have a direct impact on the economic wellbeing of Hamiltonians.” This statement applies to the use of the building as much as to the potential development of the land on which it sits. The West Town Belt includes an iconic building that dominated Hamilton’s civic, cultural and entertainment activities for over 50 years, and fits with the “connected, treasured and dynamic inner-city open space destination which everyone enjoys” vision of the West Town belt. It is a recreational space.
- “It is important that any future use of the site recognises the heritage of the site and honours it accordingly.” Surely the strongest way to honour the heritage of the site is to preserve the building. To replace the building with a few information panels will not be in keeping with the intent of this “cultural wellbeing” statement.

4. I find it troubling that this “Sharing your voice” process has all but presented to the public that the only future for the Founders Theatre is its demolition, with a clear statement that council will not fund its repair and upgrade. The website is loaded with bias, steering the reader to select Option 2 because of the words used: “basic” for Option 1, “vibrant” for Option 2, and “is there a third option?” being dismissive of any other schemes. The description for the retention of the Founders Theatre may equally well have included words such as vibrant, welcoming, modern, community space and multi-purpose activities. The requirement for Option 3 to include a business plan and separate funding would be off-putting for most people.

The second consultation run by Council (in 2017) focused on what to do with the theatre building. The majority of respondents said they wanted it repaired for community use.

The Founders Theatre was the most significant theatre building erected in Hamilton in the later twentieth century, opened in 1962. It was designed by Aubrey de Lisle, a Hamilton-based nationally-renowned architect. The theatre is an important Modernist building and is illustrative of Hamilton’s building boom and development post-World War II. The building is an asset for Hamilton.

I DO NOT WISH to speak in support of this submission.

Lynette Williams

Subject: What's the future for the Founders site? - feedback

Hi Jennie,

Please find attached my feedback on the future for the Founders site consultation.
Could you please acknowledge receipt of my feedback?

Kind regards,
Niall Baker

02 November 2020

Jennie Lavis
Hamilton City Council
Email: jennie.lavis@hcc.govt.nz

Dear Jennie,

SUBMISSION ON FUTURE OF FOUNDERS THEATRE HAMILTON

1. Please find below my submission on the proposed future of the Founders Theatre, as a resident and ratepayer of Hamilton. I thank the Council for the opportunity to provide this feedback.
2. I support **Option 3 but with the inclusion of Option 2.**
3. Option 3 can include Option 2 – I do not see these as mutually exclusive. This would keep and repair the Dame Hilda Ross Memorial Fountain and create a modern, welcoming, multi-use inner-city park with zones for different activities. The park development can occur around the existing theatre building, with restoration of the Founders Theatre to allow for a new use.
4. Retaining/repairing Founders Theatre will still allow for redevelopment and improvement of the whole site as a multi-purpose community park suitable for events, community activities and informal recreation. This could include an outdoor performance space, public art, information about the site's history, natural spaces, all ages play area and accessible cycling and walking paths.
5. The theatre itself can be repurposed into a community venue / town hall where events, community activities and informal recreation combine and intersect with the surrounding park. Hamilton lacks a town hall-type venue and this would be a valuable addition for a growing city.
6. Founders Theatre has been operating on the site since 1961 until its closure in 2016. The FAQs issued by Council for this consultation says

"In July 2016, the building was independently assessed against the District Plan heritage criteria (e.g. historic, architectural and archaeological qualities) and given a moderate ranking – not enough for protected status".

7. A web link to the relevant report by Richard Knott Limited is provided on the FAQ webpage. A review of this report shows that the assessment actually concluded the building does have heritage significance and is worthy of Plan ranking B. The information given in the FAQ appears to be incorrect and could well have negatively influenced the feedback people have given on this consultation (especially for those who have not taken the time to open the heritage report and review it). It remains unclear why the Founders Theatre has not been scheduled in the District Plan as a heritage item based on this assessment.
8. The Founders Theatre including its landscape and fountain is a historic place and seems worthy of scheduling in the Hamilton City District Plan (when considering the professional assessment above) The theatre holds cultural significance for the community.
9. The second consultation run by Council (in 2017) focused on what to do with the theatre building. The majority of respondents said they wanted it repaired for community use. The restoration of

Founders Theatre, the Dame Hilda Ross Memorial Fountain and the development of the surrounding area as a multi-purpose community park would provide an excellent community facility that we can enjoy for many years to come. The cost of this can be spread over time with the work being staged as part of the West Town Belt Master Plan project.

10. I DO NOT WISH to speak in support of this submission.

Yours sincerely,

A grey rectangular box redacting the signature of Niall Baker. A small horizontal line is visible to the right of the box.

Niall Baker

Subject: Fwd: Final

Founders Theatre Submission for Option 3
Warwick Kellaway

Jennie Lavis

Hamilton City Council

Email: jennie.lavis@hcc.govt.nz

02 November 2020

Dear Jennie

SUBMISSION ON FUTURE OF FOUNDERS THEATRE HAMILTON

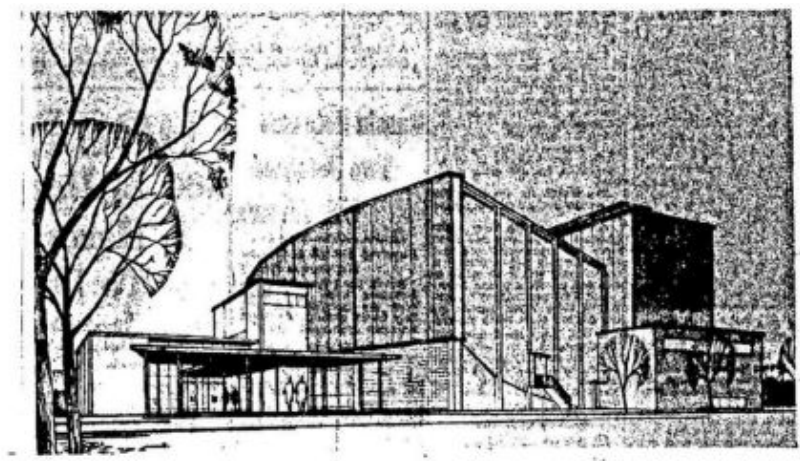
Please find below my submission on the proposed future of the Founders Theatre.

The Founders Theatre including its landscape and fountains are a historic place and worthy of scheduling in the Hamilton City District Plan and repairing. It is Hamilton's Town Hall [since 1962] and much loved by many generations. It is a significant Modernist building.

The Ralph Hotere artwork specially commissioned for the foyer, 1972, installed 1973 is a reflection of the building's status and importance to civic affairs, along with other gifts that have not been seen for several years now.

There is no other performing council place with all the functions required of a town hall and theatre that exists and can clearly be repaired to provide ongoing service.

I have been a rate payer since 1964 and have supported the Founders. We have supported the Founders with our rates for over 56 years.



My colleagues Tom Muir – former Contractor and Builder [former Hawkins] and Tom Smith -Architect [Architect Smith Pickering] fought for the last four years to protect this significant building from demolition. Both were part of the team who designed and built this place over 50 years ago.

Both died last month still fighting for a future for their Founders Theatre and believed with their decades of construction experience that it could be successfully repaired and used again.

It remains unclear why the Founders Theatre has not been proposed for scheduling by Hamilton City Council as a heritage item. The heritage assessment which was completed for council in July 2016 did give heritage value. It says that '**overall the Theatre, including pool and fountain, have heritage significance and is worthy of Plan Ranking B.**' As a retired Architect, Heritage Consultant and Hamilton rate payer I agree it has heritage significance and should be scheduled and made fit for use.

By not proposing heritage scheduling for the Founders Theatre the theatre's cultural heritage value has been ignored.

There is also the potential for heritage funding support.

Hamilton has very few historic places and these are a finite resource. The Founders Theatre is a culturally significant historic place that can be repaired and adapted for new and existing uses. It should not have a fate based on demolition by neglect.

1960s buildings if maintained will be useful for many decades. You repair regularly and strengthen as required. In my view Founders Theatre can be repaired and should have had ongoing maintenance.

My fellow Modernist architects designed the Christchurch Town Hall and Wellington Town Hall [Fowler Centre]. Both stand today with ongoing repair and maintenance yet Hamilton is prepared to demolish its historic town hall. Greenspace for recreation can be provided within the existing town belt but it should not be at the expense of our city's historic town hall that can be strengthened and used.

The Founders Theatre is Hamilton's town hall and can contribute, when repaired, to the large scale city of Hamilton. Two large theatres can clearly exist easily in a city of the size of Hamilton but there is only one Town Hall that holds generations of memories and can continue to be used by us and future generations!

Summary:

I support **Option 3 but with a combined ownership model of council [on behalf of the community] and new leases or users** in order to be able to successfully raise sufficient funding for repairs and new uses.

Along with supporting Option 3 I recommend as a Retired Architect and Heritage Consultant that the Founders Theatre be scheduled as a historic place. This is inline with the recommendation of July 2016; and in keeping with the Hamilton City Council Heritage Policy.

- I DO NOT WISH to be heard at the Hearings and Engagement Committee on 20 November.

I have fought for Hamilton heritage for over sixty years and again we sit in front of a decision to demolish Hamilton's finite heritage – of a city theatre that can hold over 1200 people and can be strengthened. Hamilton has so little surviving heritage and few large scale facilities. If partial or full demolition takes place of Hamilton's Founders Theatre Hamilton City will again be at the forefront of demolishing New Zealand's 20th century historic places and missing an opportunity for its community in the 21st century.

Yours sincerely

Warwick Kellaway

*Retired Architect B.Arch [Auckland] and Fellow of New Zealand Institute of Architects
Former Chair of Waikato Branch of New Zealand Historic Places Trust*

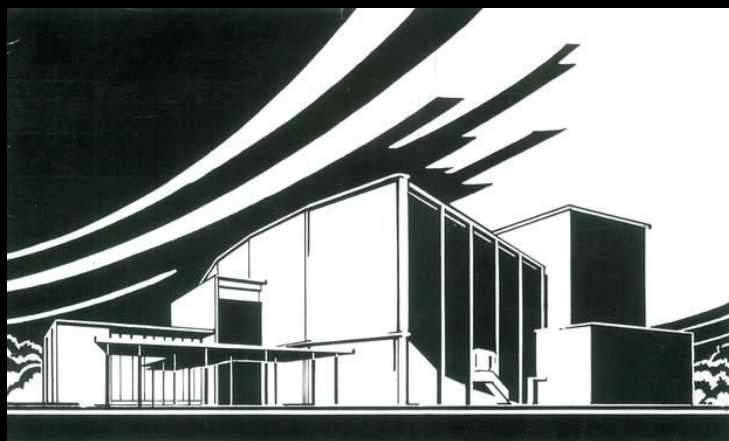
Subject: Submission on Founders Memorial Theatre Options - Have Your Say

Hi Jennie

Please find attached my submission on the Founders Memorial Theatre.
If the meeting is on zoom could you please advise.

Nga mihi

Laura Kellaway



HAMILTON
FOUNDERS MEMORIAL THEATRE

OPENING CONCERT 17 NOV. 1962



FOUNDERS MEMORIAL THEATRE

THE HAMILTON CIVIC CHOIR (Inc.)

Presents

"The Messiah"

A Sacred Oratorio by G. F. Handel



FOUNDERS MEMORIAL THEATRE - HAMILTON

TUESDAY, 11th December, 1962

at 8 p.m.

CONDUCTOR - - - H. E. SCHOFIELD

Jennie Lavis
Hamilton City Council
Email: jennie.lavis@hcc.govt.nz

03 November 2020

Dear Jennie

SUBMISSION ON FUTURE OF FOUNDERS MEMORIAL THEATRE HAMILTON

Please find below my submission on the proposed future of the Founders Theatre as the on line option was not very user friendly.

Support to Option 3 is also given on behalf of Gordon Downey of Vaile Road Hamilton retired Quantity Surveyor whose late wife Aileen was a frequent user of the Founders for her ballet school for decades and founder in 1968 of Drury Lane Dance Studio in Hamilton

The Founders Theatre is Hamilton's Town Hall since 1962 until 2016. It is part of my interface with my own and other cultures for many years from small school functions to much larger cultural events such as Crowded House concerts.

The process of deciding the fate of this historic place has been limited by the options and sometimes lack of information provided. This particularly applies to its heritage values and to any options that consider retaining the old and adding new facilities elsewhere as a large developing city would normally look at.

It was unfortunate that the heritage recommendations were not followed through publicly and shared with the community in a more proactive and positive option. Of equal concern is the lack of maintaining the structural integrity of the existing building which ratepayers over the last five decades would have expected at least in part. Maintaining large community facilities is important is a city.

The Founders Theatre remains Hamilton City's Town Hall although in need of maintenance and strengthening like many other modern buildings. It is an iconic symbol of Hamilton as a 20th century city.

Adapting [and maintaining] buildings over time is about sustainability – demolition is not. Adaption is much more aligned with Hamilton City's Agenda 21 city status which seems to have been forgotten in seeking a positive outcome for this city building and its park. But it needs partnership going forward with those who have not provided sufficient maintenance and others jointly to ensure an ongoing future for a significant cultural place. This option has not been presented.

With the capacity to hold over 1200 and performing all the functions required of a town hall and theatre at all levels once repaired it can have ongoing use. To demolish this historic cultural place is not about environmental sustainability – repairing a building retains its life cycle, it provides ongoing trade employment and could if funding support was sought provide a place that has generations of use.

The Founders Memorial Theatre including its park landscape and fountain is a historic place and worthy of scheduling in the Hamilton City District Plan as a significant Modernist city building and as far as many are concerned Hamilton's Town Hall since 1962. And it can be repaired and used.

Heritage Assessment:

Cultural values, both tangible and intangible, are applicable to the Founders Memorial Theatre. It is the physical presence of the building, its form and its park setting, its exterior and its well known interior foyer, hall and stage that is important along with the gifts contained on its walls, and those intangible values.

The Founders Theatre is a place of heritage significance and is an important Modernist building and potentially Hamilton city's most significant surviving 1960s Modernist place.

While the fountain and pool is also important it is not a replacement or form of mitigation in exchange for demolition of Hamilton City's town hall.

Nationally New Zealand's Modernist buildings are seen as very important in heritage terms and finite- and this is highlighted by the placing of the Founders Theatre on 'Heritage at Risk' of ICOMOS New Zealand.

The heritage assessment [commissioned by Hamilton City Council and completed in July 2016 by Richard Knott Limited] gave heritage value to Founders Theatre and more than sufficient heritage value to be scheduled. The Heritage Assessment clearly says that 'overall the Theatre, including pool and fountain, have heritage significance and is worthy of Plan Ranking B. That the community wanted the building repaired and reused is a strong indication of social value which was unable to be assessed within the 2016 report.

Scheduling is in line with Hamilton City's Heritage Policy, yet the Founders Theatre has not been scheduled by Hamilton City Council as a heritage item as recommended by the Heritage Assessment.

It is unfortunate that over the last few years options for the theatre have been biased by documentation in the public domain that says the place does not have sufficient heritage value for scheduling when this is not the case and a number of heritage consultants have stated otherwise. Scheduling has been recommended for a number of years. A positive presentation of heritage value, repair and reuse has not been provided.

Funding:

To repair and strengthen it needs a team approach and this place could look to a combination of funding. To expect 'others' to take on a large scale community building that has not had ongoing upgrading of the existing structure is a very big ask.

With scheduling there is the potential for heritage funding support in terms of Environment and Lottery, and if privately owned Heritage Equip, or alternative funding in partnership where Hamilton citizens still have some ownership. It is unclear if consideration has been given to heritage type funding or a combination of funding based on joint funding.

Repairing:

Repairing 1960s buildings is not unusual in New Zealand and strengthening is part of that process.

Former builder Tom Muir [former Hawkins] and Architect Tom Smith [Architect Smith Pickering] were part of the team who designed and built this building in the early 1960s. Both were highly skilled and fought the last four years to protect this significant building from demolition. Both died last month still fighting for the Founders Theatre future. They did not think it should be demolished but could be repaired and have ongoing use.

While engineers have described the strengthening issues and requirements the building remains repairable. Buildings need maintenance and strengthening is part of ongoing maintenance like other New Zealand buildings.

If repaired in stages costs can be spread over time.

Consultation Options and Funding:

The Founders is Hamilton's town hall and can still contribute, when repaired, to the large scale city of Hamilton. Future proofing for a mega city means more than one large public cultural facility is needed. There is room for a facility that has 1200 capacity [and smaller spaces] along with potential for cafes open to the park. If the Founders in 1962 could function with a much smaller population then there is no reason as a city today that Hamilton can not utilise more than one theatre facility into the future. Importantly Hamilton needs its city Town Hall like Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Auckland and Wellington retain both historic town halls and large theatres.

The second consultation on options (2017) focused on what to do with the theatre building. The majority of people wanted it repaired for community use. The issue is how to creatively fund repairs and adaption. But it needs a team approach and staged funding like any other major project. Not just expect others to fix it up.

Option 3 should be a partnership between council [the owners for the community] and new lessees in order to be able to successfully raise sufficient funding.

Use of the wider site for recreation and other services can clearly operate within the Parks Management Plan, with the Founders providing a range of protected covered facilities. Option 3 is not exclusive - both outdoor activities and a multi-functional building can support community in the same way the cricket and rugby grounds on the town belt have for many decades.

Summary:

I support **Option 3 with an amendment to co-own the facility in order to obtain funding for repairs and new uses to the historic Founders Memorial Theatre** – our Town Hall. I also support use of the outdoor spaces around the theatre building with better connections to the building and wider use of the full town belt for recreation.

As part of ongoing protection of Hamilton's cultural heritage I recommend and support the scheduling of the Founders Theatre as a historic place as a plan change and/or in the proposed new district plan as recommended to council in July 2016; and as per the Hamilton City Council Heritage Policy. Both of the two historic fountains [Founders and Fountain City] should be scheduled and protected.

The proposal to demolish the Founders and retain just the fountain is not mitigation for the loss of a significant historic place. It is a misunderstanding of the cultural values of this historic city place that are both physical [tangible] and intangible. It is an iconic building and it is its physicality that is significant within its original park setting. This is also a building with a significant interior that is important and holds community memories but gives a physical presence for cultural events and has for generations of Hamilton people for the last 50 years.

The future of Hamilton's Founders Memorial Hall and Hamilton's Town hall should be decided in the Draft 2021-31 Long-Term Plan process in March 2021.

A more positive option of repair and adaption of the iconic Founders Theatre should be developed in partnership and with staged funding and creativity that reflects Hamilton's cultures and presented.

- I may wish to be heard at the Hearings and Engagement Committee .

Y



Laura Kellaway



and on behalf of Gordon Downey of Hamilton Retired Quantity Surveyor and Patron of the Arts of Hamilton

Note- two concert images are from Hamilton City Libraries Collection.

Appendix:

Excerpt from Heritage Assessment for Hamilton City Council by Richard Knott Limited July 2016

Item 5

Attachment 2

10. Historic Heritage Assessment Summary and Recommendation

It is not necessary for a building or structure to exhibit significance under all assessment criteria to be considered to have such overall significance that it meets the criteria to be scheduled in the PDP. In this case, whilst it has been established that the Founders Theatre has no context/group, technological, archaeological or scientific significance, it is clear from the evaluation that it is an important building which has historic, physical/aesthetic/architectural and cultural significance.

When viewed as a whole it is clear that the building does have heritage significance and is worthy of Plan Ranking B.

Criteria	Significance
Historic Qualities	Moderate Significance
Physical/Aesthetic/Architectural Qualities	Moderate Significance
Context or Group Qualities	Some Significance
Technological Qualities	No Significance
Archaeological Qualities	No Significance
Cultural Qualities	High Significance
Scientific Qualities	No Significance
Overall Significance	Moderate Significance Worthy of Plan Ranking B

11. Overall Conclusion and Recommendations

Following a site visit to the Founders Theatre and having undertaken research into the building, it is concluded that overall the Theatre, including the pool and fountain, have heritage significance and is worthy of Plan Ranking B.



Richard Knott MRTPI IHBC IHE
Director, Richard Knott Limited
17th July 2016

Subject: The Founders Theater - A plea from a Resident

Good day Madam Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and our Councillors,

Today I feel compelled to write to you as a collective in order to seek your help with a matter that has deeply distressed me and others in our community.

I am not going to give you a lecture about who voted for you and that you are the voice of the people in Council. Not even going to talk about democracy and integrity or matters such as that. Fact is, we all know why you serve on Council and you know why you are there.

So, today I, as a resident of Hamilton, come to you cap in hand and am pleading for you to assist us folks who want to save the Founders Theatre.

I am deeply concerned that Council has adopted a three option submission process for the Founders theatre. There is NO fairness in that. There is enough evidence that there was NO reason for the Founders Theatre to have been closed. None of the reports to Council suggested that.

This old lovely theatre, where I had my graduation, needs someone to just love her again. I am not going to enter a debate about the new Regional theatre. I only want to talk about the Founders Theatre.

There is this mystical figure of \$20 M for the revamp that gets thrown around and it is just not true that it will cost that much to get the theatre up and running again.

I attended a presentation by Warren James who has done an estimate for earthquake strengthening and total revamp of the theatre. When I say revamp, I mean revamp. Everything, new sound equipment, lights, acoustic panels, new piano, smoke curtain etc. Cost for everything a mere \$2.9 M. Nowhere close to \$20 M. The secret will be, not to allow Council anywhere near the revamp, because they will contract half a dozen consultants who will just milk the budget dry. Sorry, but I am a bit up front about things.

So, let's say the estimate blows out. In construction I know that more often than not, your cost will double and it will take you twice as long to complete the work. That will give us \$5.8 M and 12 weeks to complete.

When I was a Councillor back in South Africa I was on the oversight committee for the Johannesburg Civic Theatre. (The complex actually had three theatres in it). In order to be a profitable entity we made it a receiving theatre. A receiving theatre is a theatre which does not produce its own repertoire but instead receives touring theatre companies, usually for a brief period such as three nights or a full week, but can also be for far longer periods. The incoming company may receive a share of the box office takings or a minimum guaranteed payment.

That proved to be a good working model and removes the burden of the productions away from the entity.

So, I am pleading with you Councillors, to give the old girl a new lease of life. Let us do the right thing, let's restore her, give her back her dignity. Let's protect our heritage for a change. How about we restore it and have a grand opening night with a world class ballet production; I have such a desire for a grand opening. Ladies in long gowns, men in their tux. See, I am an old fashioned romantic. I grew up in the entertainment industry and just love it.

I support the elements in the Toti submission and have had sight of Andrew Bydder's submission and believe that that should form the basis of where we go with the Founders Theatre.

I want to be as helpful as I can be, so here is a video link to the presentation of Warren James. It is so worth watching it. <https://www.facebook.com/TeamIntegrityNewZealand/videos/2452620391697308>

If there were to be an opportunity to speak to this option of saving the theatre, I would so much appreciate it.

Thank you for reading my Email to you and again I plead with you, let's do the right thing together, let's save the Founders Theatre.

Kind regards,

Rudi du Plooy - Hamilton West

Subject: Founders Theatre feedback

To:-Jennie, The Mayor, Hamilton City Councillors, CEO & Staff,

Your online form did not contain another viable solution for Founders and that is to retain the theatre, refurbish, strengthen and enhance as desired by the public..

Personally I know of no one (in the public) in favour of the proposed new Victoria St. theatre apart from the Momentum organisation who have vested interests. (N.B. Many of you know I have been involved with Hamilton Residents & Ratepayers Assn Inc since 2006 and our group has a well rounded grassroots relationship with the public in Hamilton).

Since the site of the proposed Regional Theatre in Victoria St is "Waahi Tapu whenua" I would suggest the funding to Momentum and/or funds tagged for this project to be re-directed back to Founders where it belonged in the first instance.

We live in unprecedented economic circumstances where there is neither the finance nor appetite to build anything new (Regional Theatre) with multi-millions required. Ratepayers and especially families and those on low and fixed incomes are struggling to pay rates let alone living expenses. Any rates increases due to "nice to have" projects are going to force more homelessness and loss of property rights in our city.

Hamilton City Council has over 200 parks already to look after then why do we need another patch of green if Founders is forcibly demolished?

People in Hamilton are bewildered at the thought of the destruction of an iconic building that is part of our heritage and that many have had their graduation ceremony held there, been entertained by ballet, orchestras', plays', pop groups and so on. The public have been denied the pleasure of the use of their own venue and this has been clearly set out in the feedback architect Andrew Bydder has sent to you and that Hamilton Residents & Ratepayers Assn Inc. have a copy which has been shared to our networks.

I 100% support Andrew Bydder's comprehensive feedback to Hamilton City Council on Founders Theatre.

I have two sons in their 20's who live in Hamilton and hold degrees in Media Arts and have expressed to me that they wish Founders to be kept.

My request is to retain Founders Theatre and do what is necessary to have it running as it should and DO NOT DEMOLISH..

Please acknowledge receipt & I wish to be heard.

Mischele Rhodes

Subject: Submission on the future of the founders Theatre

Submission on the future of the Founders Theatre.

I am well past being tricked by the Council's biased presentations on this subject and am writing my submission in this form so that it cannot be misinterpreted.

The costs mentioned for the restoration of the Founders Theatre have been blown out of proportion in order to get the public thinking along the track of creating a new theatre, something which even now is a long way from being created.

I have consulted an engineer who estimated the likely cost of the required renovation of the Founders Theatre at less than \$500,000. This has been confirmed to me by people striving to retain the theatre in its present form.

I, therefore, will support any group providing a credible fiscal plan under Option 3.

Whatever the outcome of this submission, I advise that it would be an incredibly stupid decision to remove the Theatre until the new theatre has been completed and in service.

Tony Dixon

Subject: Founder theatre Feedback

To: Jennie, Mayor, Councillors, CEO, & Staff,

I support Andrew Bydder's comprehensive feedback to you.

DO NOT DEMOLISH Founders Theatre.

I request a Public Inquiry into why the Founders Theatre was closed and the processes involved and who was involved in the broader perspective.

Please acknowledge receipt.

Tom MacRae.

Subject: Have your say on the Founders Site

Dear Mayor Southgate

I'm having my say at the last hour on what should be done with the Founders Theatre.

Hamilton City Council have been asking businesses to move into the CBD area to enhance the economy as business are moving out of the area due to low foot traffic.

Waikato District Health Board, Waikato Regional Council and ACC are all moving to the CBD area within the next year, and approximately 2000 people will be working in the City to improve the economy.

All good and well.....BUT....

Where is the parking.? You want them there, but you are NOT accommodating the people in having parking and able to park in walking distance to their workplace.

Solution:-

Convert the Founders Site into a parking area.

This is a much better prospect than converting it into a playground/park.

Better still build a multistorey car park , 2 floors down and 4 up (even more). Give parking to all these people you want to move into the CBD area. Have multiple park 'n rides all over the city and outskirts every 15 minutes, this will also alleviate the current parking problems in the City.

Listen to what the workers want in the city. You want us there. Help us..

Thanks

Louise

Subject: Founders Theatre submission

I would like to submit that Hamilton City has a prime opportunity to create yet another iconic landmark, to further put "Hamilton on the map" both within New Zealand and Internationally by building a wonderful theatre on the existing Founders Theatre site.

We already have the Hamilton Gardens, and the development of the "Victoria on the River" (or should that be "Kirikiriroa on The River"?) as a stage in turning the city to face the river is just fantastic. Now the same perspective needs to be continued for the Hamilton Founders Theatre, and not be strongly influenced by people personally bankrolling the Victoria St option.

There is already a well-established legacy associated with the Founders Theatre that is to be beholden, and so to naturally continue this with the building of a new theatre on the same site would be visionary. It is part of the heritage of Hamilton. How exciting!

The existing Founders Theatre site would also offer:

- An opportunity to build an iconic standalone building for all to continue to behold
- Ease of logistical access for visiting artists and staging
- Fantastic "red carpet" nights
- Enhance Boyes park area
- Ease of theatre patron access and parking
- Greatly enhance our cultural heritage

To bury it amongst the pubs of south Victoria street would be such a shame, never mind the

- lack of logistical access. How difficult is it now along Victoria Street and into Sapper Moore-Jones Place to access places? Imagine a truck and trailer unit trying to deliver staging;
- lack of parking (competing with the pub/restaurant patrons) and
- very likely theatre patron abuse from the late night drunk and disorderly at the end of a show.

So I strongly suggest that the existing site offers far more opportunity for now and the future, for Hamilton's theatre and for Hamilton City.

If Christchurch can do it with the iconic Cathedral, Hamilton needs to do it with saving/enhancing the iconic Founders Theatre.

Regards

Craig Tomlinson

Subject: Option 2 is the best one

Hi

We all agreed Option 2

It is the best one

Katherine CHI

02-11-2020

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Mr Shannon J Osborn



To: His Worship the Mayor
Hon. Paula Southgate
& Councilors.

Re: Founders Theatre.

As a Citizen of this Fair City of Hamilton, I take an interest in the City's Past, Present and Future.

The Debate over the Founders Theatre has been ongoing now for some time. Because the Council has decided to support the proposed new Regional Theatre, so it has discarded the Founders, which I believe is very foolish. Located on an attractive Green belt, Founders is an Ideal site for a City Theatre/Town Hall/Alternative Music Venue. The issue of the proposed Regional Theatre is that it is located on Victoria Street, the main thoroughfare that is already overly congested. And it would not be ideal as an alternative music venue or Town Hall. The new Regional Theatre has its own niche. The future of Founders, lies down a different path.

The Founders Theatre is a part of Hamilton's Social and cultural history and is etched into the heart of generations of Artists and Performers. Local citizen's also have a fond attachment to the Founders Theatre, which was originally built thanks to the generosity of Hamilton Citizens and businesses and community groups.

Former Hamiltonians have grown up with Founders and it was an important part of City Life. One such former Local boy is Radio New Zealand Host Peter Macillwaine who in a recent letter to me, asked me to tell you in the submission to please save the Founders Theatre. Peter has fond memories like many of his generation of Hamiltonians, of going to the Founders to see live shows, including the Pointer Sisters.

Many famous artists have performed at the Founders Theatre. One of the most celebrated being Louis Armstrong. Other artists include well known Kiwi entertainers, the Late Rob Guest and many other well-known New Zealand artists. It is true that the City Council has voted to support the new Regional Theatre, however, the huge amount of history tied up in Founders, cannot be shifted to the new Theatre. So, automatically, the new Theatre though a flash addition to town, lacks substance. It has no history of Great artists, without the history, it has little meaning. A great many people, have an attachment to the Founders Theatre because of the entertainment, as well as social history tied up with the venue. For Hamilton, it has nothing else with all that history tied up with it.

And it is that history that gives Founders merit. For decades it was the central premier venue in Hamilton for entertainment. That has got to mean something. It would be very mean spirited and short sighted for the Hamilton City Council to vote to demolish Founders, without first exploring all options to save the Theatre.

The Council has had bureaucrats provide their own biased reports on Founders. Please disregard their desire to demolish the theatre. It is not the right decision to make. The venue was paid for by Public Subscription and charitable donations as well as some support from the Hamilton City Council. It has been the host of numerous events, plays, performances and other functions and is etched into the heart of Hamilton residents. The Council must tread cautiously. It must look to all options possible to save the Theatre. And you needn't look far because, former Mayor, Margaret Evans has been working away with a group of dedicated people and they have come up with a plan for the Founders Theatre. I think that Former Mayor Evans and her supporters deserve a chance to save the Theatre.

Hamilton lacks both a proper Town Hall, and, also, an alternative Music Venue. The Regional Theatre may be great for the big flash productions however, you are hardly going to want a pub Rock Band like Dejavooodoo playing in that 1200 seat Regional Theatre. Obviously they are never going to attract 1200 people. But they would certainly get up to 200 people. What is required is a smaller venue for live music performances. Founders is ideal. I believe that there is an events center in Hamilton, yet, if you believe that all live music should be held at the events center then you do not understand live music. There needs to be choice of venues. Founders looks like an ideal venue for the small middle of the road audiences, and for the rock element. And it is not crammed up in the City but is located on the Greenbelt and has plenty of space.

Many Rock music venues have been lost because the venue is located in the heart of the City and other property owners and tenants around the venue have complained about the Music so the venue has been shut down,, That has been the situation facing live music venues in Cities across New Zealand for the last 20 years. Those property owners and tenants in highly built up areas do not want live music venues right smack dab in the middle of their community for obvious reasons. However Founders Theatre is unique because it is not in the heart of the City but on the CBD Fringe and has space around it so that noise pollution from concerts is not immediately noticed, as the Founders is not surrounded by other buildings but has space, lots of it. Which makes it ideal as a live music venue, and for classic rock bands catering to small to medium sized audiences. And it is in a part of town that is home to frequent loud events. The Cricket Ground and the Stadium being within the precinct that the Founders is in. Both venues make a bit of noise but, its confined within that area. So people accept it. Founders is also within that precinct. So people can accept that there will be some noise from that area. It is different though of Founders were directly smack dab in the CBD.

A look at the costs to get the Founders Theatre up to scratch to be used as a music venue, and I believe that the figure of \$80 million has been bandied about. And I firmly believe that figure to be a load of crap. Like many others, I believe that Founders could be made workable and safe for less than \$20 million. The \$80 million figure that has been given to Council is a scaremongers tactic

intended to shock the Council into voting to demolish the Theater. The Council needs to do its homework and stop instantly believing everything that City Bureaucrat's tell it.

I understand that the Council does not want to be lumbered with what it views as a liability, the old Founders Theatre. In this respect I urge the Council to look at the numerous examples around the Country, and, around the world, where Councils have formed facility partnerships with parties of interest. Often these facility partnerships are community based and involve the formation of a Trust. The Building remains in Council ownership but its management and investment is handed over to the Trust who then organize a range of funding streams and also take on the commercial risk. Another form of facility's partnership is the Public Private Partnership whereby the Local Authority forms a joint venture with a Private operator who leases the facility for a set period and takes on all the investment requirements and also, the risk. There are numerous examples both within New Zealand, and overseas, of such facilities partnerships and I urge the Hamilton City Council to seriously look at those models, as a way forward for the Founders. Founders Theatre is a strong business proposition because it is a moderate sized venue, located with plenty of space around it for parking and expansion. There is a vast number of performers and artists and such, who only want to use middle of the road size venues. Obviously a band like Dejavoodoo won't fill up a 1200 seat luxury Theatre. But it might attract 200 people. Founders is located right in the heart of the City and has a lot to offer. It is also, a moderate sized venue.

It is better to have a sold out venue and all seats filled, then to have a half empty venue. It's the psychology of size and image. If an event is televised it looks much better to have every seat filled, quite easy to do in a moderate size venue like Founders. However, the bigger the venue the greater the risk of having many empty seats which does not look good. So I think artists or event organizer's would prefer the moderate size Founders because the chances of filling every seat is much greater.

Hamilton is one of the only City's in New Zealand without a proper Town Hall and again, I Think Founders would fulfill that role adequately. Waste not want not, Recycle is the word of today. Why waste a good venue like Founders when it could be reinvented as the City's Town Hall.

Former Mayor Margaret Evans and her supporters have a plan and a vision for the Founders Theatre and I think at the very least that the City should allow them the chance to save the Theatre. There are many good examples of facilities partnerships across the Country and the Council would be foolish not to explore that option. It is a workable solution to the question of what to do with Founders. There is clearly much public support and also, support from the entertainers, for retaining the Founders. Margaret Evans has a strong base of support and I believe that within a short time, they will be in a position to come to the Council and say we have a proposal and will form a Trust to carry it out. The Council needs therefore, to retain the Founders Theatre and work to shift its management into a Charitable Trust or commercial Facilities Partnership. Ultimately if a Group like that which Margaret Evans is head of, can form themselves into a Trust to manage the Founders Theatre, then, the City Council would be silly to pass up the chance. There are people wanting to volunteer their time and expertise to save the Founders Theatre, why not give them the Chance? The Council will not lose, It has everything to gain because, It will benefit, from another venue being opened up in the City. If done by a Charitable Trust or Commercial partner, the cost of doing up Founders falls not on Councils shoulders but that of the facilities partner. In forming the

partnership with a community or commercial entity, the cost and risk of investing in founders becomes the responsibility of the partner agency. There is a huge body of experience to say that facilities partnerships work.

Please do not demolish the Founders Theatre. Please, look to the possibility of facilities partnerships as a way forward for the Founders Theatre. Council may have no interest in running the theatre, but there is a significant body of individual's and private groups who do want to see that venue saved because they can see the potential in it and they know also, how to raise the funds independent of council to make the dream come true.

If the Hamilton City Council has any sense then it will save the Founders Theatre and look to forming a partnership with a community group or commercial entity for the future of the Founders Theatre. The act of saving the Theatre won't cost the Council any money. The plan I am putting forward is for Council to pass on the responsibility for the theatre to a Charitable Trust or Commercial partner, as soon as possible. And leave it to them to organize. I think you will be pleasantly surprise at what external parties can achieve. Community groups and also, private commercial entities can often see the value in something that closed minded public bureaucracy cannot. Just look at the old Kopu Bridge as an example. NZTA wanted to demolish it, but a community group managed to save that historic bridge at the last minute and now that bridge is going in leaps and bounds and will be an integral part of the Thames heritage experience. In much the same way, the Founders Theatre may appear to you to be of no further use, however, there are people out there who think differently, so, the Council should give them the chance to take over the management of the Theatre.

And that is all I have to say on the Matter.

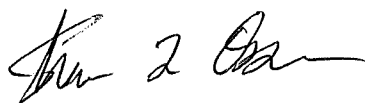
Please do not demolish Founders Theatre. Please look to the potential of facilities partnerships with the community sector or commercial enterprises, as a way forward for that venue.

As a last note. Past Mayor Mrs Margaret Evans needs to be taken serious as she has a body of supporters out there ready to go with a serious plan and vision for the future of the Founders Theatre.

Please support Past Mayor Evans and her team. They have a vision and a plan for the future of Founders Theatre.

Regards

Yours Faithfully and Fraternally



Mr Shannon J Osborn esq