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DUNEDIN TOWN HALL

MORAY PLACE, DUNEDIN



CONSERVATION REPORT

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Commission

This report has been commissioned following an invitation by Octa Associates Ltd, Dunedin to provide a Conservation Report for Dunedin Town Hall and is likely to form part of the planning approval process for plans to upgrade the building.

It is felt by Dunedin City Council, who are the building's owners and operators, that the Town Hall is no longer able to adequately cater for the number of patrons and the types of use which it now serves and as such a number of options for modification and/or extension are currently being considered.

1.2 Purpose and Use of this Report

A Conservation Report, in this instance, is required in order to guide the design team regarding the heritage values of the building as well as to inform the planning process. It will also provide useful guidance during the construction period of the project as regards detailed design and identification of heritage building fabric and its protection.

Essentially the Report should act as a guidance document for any work carried out to the Town Hall, either now or in the future. It provides an outline of the challenges and opportunities presented by the existing building and should be the first port of call in understanding the building's significance, the significance of its internal spaces and fabric and ultimately the formulation of an appropriate approach to any alterations, interventions or additions that may be required.

The Inventories contained in Appendix to the Report should be used as a reference guide in approaching any of the building's individual elevations or spaces. They are intended as a long-term reference resource and are not limited in their usefulness to currently proposed building changes.

In addition, the Report – and particularly the Inventories – act as a record of the building in its current state and should be considered a contemporary addition to the already extensive archival record relating to the Town Hall.

This Report does not relate to any specific design or plan and should be considered the first step in an ongoing consultation process. We strongly recommend the continuing involvement of a recognised heritage professional in all decisions that impact on the fabric or context of the building.

1.3 Details of personnel and site visits

The building was visited on Wednesday 2nd April 2008 by Jackie Gillies, with Jeff Thompson of Opus Architecture and Svend Tolson the Building Manager.

A thorough site survey was then carried out by Eimear O'Connell of Jackie Gillies and Associates on dates ranging over a two week period, from 12th May to 24th May 2008.

This report has been prepared by Eimear O'Connell, with assistance from Karen Beker of Waimate, who carried out much of the Historic Research.

1.4 Location

Dunedin Town Hall is located at Moray Place Dunedin, and occupies a large site bounded on the north by Moray Place, on the east by Municipal Lane, on the west by Harrop Street and on the south by the Municipal Chambers building (The Octagon), to which it is adjoined.

The building has two main entrance facades: The north entrance to the Town Hall, located on Moray Place, and the west entrance to the Dunedin Centre, located at the southern end of Harrop Street.

1.5 District Plan

The building is listed on the Dunedin City Council District Plan, item B410, category 2, and protected features are described as the “façade and bulk appearance to Moray Place”

It also forms part of The Octagon Precinct, as identified in Policy 13.3.4 and Section 13.5.2 of the plan. The building features, furthermore, in two of the four ‘best urban vistas’ identified in the plan: (i) The view of the First Church spire from Moray Place looking down Harrop street, and (ii) Looking at the Town Hall area from the Filleul Street/St Andrew Street intersection.

1.6 HPT Registration

The building is registered with the NZ Historic Places Trust, category II. A Category II registration by NZHPT is taken to refer to the building or site in its entirety, including interior, exterior and site context.

1.7 Conservation Approach

The assessment and recommendations contained in this report are based on contemporary best practice as summarised by the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value (contained in Appendix 6). It should be noted that the report is based on the Conservation of the existing building rather than on Restoration to a presumed original state, although restoration of particular elements may be considered on their individual merits.

1.8 Format of Report

The main body of this Report includes a summary of Historic Research carried out; a chronicle of Modifications made to the building since its construction; a Description of the building; a report on the Condition of the building; a summary of Significant Fabric; an assessment of Heritage Significance; an assessment of Influences and Constraints on the conservation/modification of the building; an outline of the Conservation Approach and Philosophy to be adopted; and an Implementation section, which essentially acts as a series of recommendations for how the information contained in the preceding chapters can be put into practice in the Conservation, Maintenance, Alteration, Upgrading or possible Extension of the Building.

It is important to underline that the Description, Condition Report and Schedule of Significant Fabric contained in the body of the report are summary in nature and act as an abstraction of the main points contained in the detailed building Inventories in Appendices 1 and 2. The summary chapters contained in the body of the report are therefore not exhaustive and should not be taken to contain all necessary information relating to the Description, Condition or Significant Fabric of the building.

Appendices to the Report contain: External and Internal Inventories, as mentioned above (Appendices 1 and 2); A copy of the original Design Competition Conditions (Appendix 3); A copy of a contemporary article detailing the results of the Design Competition (Appendix 4); a list of room names assigned to the new Dunedin Centre in the 1980s and their origins (Appendix 5); and a copy of the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Industrial Heritage Value (Appendix 6).

Drawings relating to the Report have been bound separately in order to allow for ease of consultation in conjunction with the Report. These are contained in 'Volume 2: Drawings' and include: Site Plan; Inventory Drawings, showing the numbering system used in compiling the Internal Inventory and to be consulted in conjunction with same; Significant Spaces Drawings, giving a graphic representation of the significance ratings ascribed to spaces throughout the building; a full set of original 1927 architect's drawings, which are of interest for Historical purposes but also form a useful reference in conjunction with the Inventories in identifying modifications to the original layout; and a 1942 drawing showing plans and capacities for Emergency Air-Raid Shelters in the Town Hall basement.