

**BEFORE THE NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL HEARING COMMISSIONERS**

**IN THE MATTER OF**      The Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**                      The proposed building at 39-41 Molesworth Street, New  
Plymouth (LUC23/48350)

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STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF JULIE HEALEY

ON BEHALF OF NGĀTI TE WHITI HAPŪ

DATED 31 July 2024

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PO Box 304  
Taranaki Mail Centre  
NEW PLYMOUTH

## **A INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE**

1. *Ko Paritutu te pou  
Ko Tokomaru te waka  
Ko Ngāmotu te moana  
Ko Te Atiawa te iwi  
Ko Ngāti Te Whiti Hapū ki o Ngāmotu te hāpu me Ngā Mahanga ā Tāiri hoki  
Ko Wahi Tapu te Urupa kei reira ōku tūpuna  
Ko Julie Healey angeau.*
2. Kia tuku te mihi ki a koutou, tēnā no tātau katoa.
3. My full name is Julie Healey.
4. I am the Chairperson of Ngāti Te Whiti Hapū (**‘Ngāti Te Whiti’** or **‘Hapū’**). I am providing this statement in support of the submission of Ngāti Te Whiti.
5. I have been involved in resource consents with Ngāti Te Whiti since 2018.
6. Specific experience relevant to this application include:
  - a. Provision of evidence to development of, and multiple hearings of the New Plymouth District Plan review process, through Ngā Kaitiaki since 2018, through notification and hearing processes. This includes supporting the evidence of Te Kotahitanga o Te Atiawa to the City Centre Zone.
  - b. Provision of cultural advice to the development of the Ngāmotu New Plymouth City Centre Design Strategy.
  - c. Provision of cultural advice to a number of developments in commercial areas within our ancestral lands, including to the applicant at another property he owns in the City Centre Zone.

## **B PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS EVIDENCE**

7. The purpose of this evidence is to address:
  - a. The planned character of built environments within Ngāti Te Whiti,
  - b. Cultural values present, and
  - c. Applied cultural expression within built environments.
8. In preparing this evidence I have read:
  - a. The Ngāmotu New Plymouth City Centre Strategy, including the Ngāmotu New Plymouth Māori Design Principles.
  - b. The Te Atiawa iwi environmental management plan – Tai Whenua, Tai Tangata, Tai Ao.

## **C POSITION REGARDING THIS APPLICATION**

9. Ngāti Te Whiti has outlined consistently throughout this process and the engagement to date our advice that design features that reflect the values of Ngāti Te Whiti must be visible in the landscape from multiple public places, including within the coastal area. This is evidenced in the emails attached to the application, and again in the supplementary information provided by the applicant.
10. As outlined in the supplementary information provided by the Applicant; Ngāti Te Whiti and Ngāti Tūparikino engaged with the applicant and their experts following submissions being lodged where this advice was provided again; the outcome of that engagement being the Applicants designers working with Kerehama Waru-Puu to produce options to present back to the hui to discuss further.
11. In our view, this engagement is not complete and remained on-going at time the Applicant requested that this process proceed to hearing.
12. In the absence that the elements of applied cultural expressions are not visible from public viewpoints, including the coastal environs it is not considered that the building or surrounds will appropriately contribute to the planned character of the City Centre.

## **D EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNED CHARACTER**

13. There are four identified pā sites in the City Centre Zone - Māwhera, Puke Ariki, Te Kawau and at Waimanu, and several more in the Mixed-Use Zone that surrounds the City Centre Zone. These areas, along with our tūpuna awa of Huatoki and Mangaotuku, and reef systems along the coastal edge adjacent to the city centre remain special places that are unique to our rohe, and that are core to the identity of Ngāti Te Whiti.
14. Today, these are subjugated by city design and the buildings and structures that have been established over time that more recent proposals and processes have worked to retrofit applied cultural expressions onto building activities in these locations to work towards the planned character of the city centre. Built form on these sites, or on the periphery including applied cultural expressions established in recent history include:
15. Within the City Centre Zone, Puke Ariki (the pā) is reflected into the design of Puke Ariki the building, use and site as set out in the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). It is noted that a proposal lodged with NPDC for a new building for private apartments at 6 Young Street within the Mixed-Use Zone and on the periphery of Puke Ariki also reflects the context into built form (SUB24/50113 & LUC24/48530). Ngā Motu House (formerly the Atkinson Building) at Devon Street West is a further example of cultural values reflected in built form. This property is located adjacent to Maramamao (the largest cultivation area on the periphery of Puke Ariki).
16. Hana Te Hemara is painted on the Library adjacent to Puke Ariki.
17. The second is at Māwhera where an unimplemented landuse consent LUC20/47704 approved a six storey multi-use building that reflects cultural values in built form.

18. The third is at Te Kawau on which Centre City currently sits. The owners of Centre City have engaged the advice of Ngāti Te Whiti and are working to the Ngāmotu New Plymouth Centre City Design Principles (attached to this evidence).
19. The fourth is Waimanu at which the application site is located on/in proximity too. Identified extents of Sites and Areas of Significance to Māori are not the sole determinant of the importance we hold with our ancestral lands. It is acknowledged that the current extent for Te Waimanu is adjacent to the application site, however it is important to note that the Wāhi Tapu and Archaeological Sites review remains on-going for a number of iwi and hapū in the district.
20. The owners of the Egmont Steam Flour Mill Building are working with the Hapū to understand how narratives associated with Huatoki and Paiare are to be reflected in that project, noting it is also a heritage building.
21. Elsewhere properties with a commercial zoning and a SASM include the Taranaki Cathedral Church of St Mary's located in a Mixed-Use Zone adjoining the City Centre Zone within the extent of Pūkākā. Recent upgrades of that site have included the establishment of Te Whare Hononga with built form that reflect that context.
22. At 5 Hakirau Street, Moturoa the property is zoned Commercial, and located entirely on Ōtaka Pā. Co-design between the landowner and Ngāti Te Whiti has been on-going for many years and reflected specifically into the provisions of the Commercial Zone to achieve built form that reflects the values of Ngāti Te Whiti, and Ōtaka.
23. Ngāti Tuparikino and Ngāti Te Whiti are working with New Plymouth District Council on the design of Tuparikino Hub to reflect narrative within our ancestral lands at the racecourse location.
24. Design discussions are not foreign to Ngāti Te Whiti as applied cultural expression becomes more common-place across the built form of our communities, which in turn exposes the broader community to the values present in the place we all live in.

**E THE PROPOSAL, AND RESULTING ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS ON TANGATA WHENUA**

25. The proposal will result in a large building visible from many public places as shown in the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA'). The current design of the building has no reference to Ngāti Te Whiti, our values or relationships, cultural norms, or Te Waimanu. The proposed applied cultural expression (being the kohatu, and the pavement design) are also not visible from many, if any public spaces assessed through the LVIA. Buildings are a long time in the environment. Decisions around their design reverberate forward for a long time.
26. I have lived my whole life until recently with a City Centre, and a built environment that has largely ignored who we are as mana whenua, and our relationships with this place. I do know what it is to live without it and can only imagine what it would be like with it.

27. The effect of not knowing places, of architecture subjugating our values and connections through design directly adversely affects our relationship with our ancestral lands and wāhi tapu in this area. The cumulative effect of this across the city centre is pronounced and significantly adverse.
28. The opportunity with design is to create spaces that enable people to connect to places and spaces, know who they are and where they stand. These are fundamental elements of the planned character of the city centre. This is clear in the design guide for the City Centre<sup>1</sup>, and is made plain in the considered, consistent and genuine advice Ngāti Te Whiti has provided in a number of statutory planning processes over the last five years, as well as to a number of developments some of which are referenced above.
29. The applied cultural expression established in the existing environment discussed above have varied to fit with their context. Some are overt. Some are more subtle. With respect to this proposal, the additions proposed to this building will result in this being prominent above other buildings on this coastal edge and will be highly visible as shown in the LVIA.
30. As this is a pā site, the prominence of the building presents opportunities to establish in a visible way references to Waimanu into the landscape that is visually accessible to our community. As outlined in the supplementary information provided by the applicant, we discussed the need for applied cultural expression at the site to contribute to the planned character of the area. Given the work into designing the building to date, and the discussion regarding the future use of the building being mixed commercial as well as the family home for Mr Doody we discussed utilising existing design elements on the building (being the aluminium battens shown on the western facade and referenced in the design statement and LVIA attached with the application) to establish subtle cultural motif's on the building.
31. As outlined above, these concepts were presented and discussed with our clear advice being option 1 being most appropriate given the context of the site and these building activities within. It is important to note that option 2 is not the applied cultural expression that would be established should this proposal have been developed in a co-design manner, more a reflection of the process we are currently in. Option 1 goes some what to remedy the adverse effects association with building activities on wāhi tapu, and the relationship Ngāti Te Whiti is able to have with these spaces.
32. As the proposed site is private property with no public access, Ngāti Te Whiti is reliant on the visibility of any applied cultural expressions from the public spaces identified in the LVIA to engage with the site, and to convey cultural values present.
33. Based on the plans included in the evidence of Ms Martin, the totality of the applied cultural expression will at best be visible from the driveway to the site, and possibly the adjoining carpark.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.npdc.govt.nz/planning-our-future/ngamotu-new-plymouth-city-centre-strategy/>

34. This proposal, if approved, would result in a new building in the city centre that perpetuates large buildings subjugating the kōrero and relationship of Ngāti Te Whiti with our ancestral lands. Given the addition of height and bulk that overlooks public spaces and Waimanu with scant reference to the cultural context of this location I do not consider that this is an appropriate building activity in this location.

**F RECOMMENDATIONS**

35. To address the actual and potential adverse effects that I have raised in this evidence on planned character, I recommend:
- a. That as a part of the site visit, should the Hearing Commissioner wish, that a person with knowledge of Ngāti Te Whiti that can explain the cultural landscape can be made available to help to inform the commission. It is noted that this has been available and undertaken with the Applicant.
  - b. That the hearing be adjourned to enable further work be done to ensure that the practical constraints raised in the evidence of Mr Kevin Doody are addressed through on-going design conversations enabling applied cultural expression reflecting Te Waimanu, and the relationship of Ngāti Te Whiti and Ngāti Tuparikino to be realised on the building and visible in the broader landscape as a core element of the planned character of the City Centre Zone.
  - c. Failing this, that the application in its current form be declined.

Julie Healey  
Chairperson  
Ngāti te Whiti Hapu

*Julie Healey*

31 July 2024