

**Submission to: Waterfront Development Sub-Committee  
Proposed Refurbishment of the Odlin's Building:  
Wellington Waterfront**

7 October 2003

The Civic Trust has for many years advocated the retention of the group of three buildings of which Odlin's is a part, as a heritage unit. We made submissions against the moving of the Ambulance Building when LHML applied for a resource consent to move it to the Rowing Club area. This was followed by our appeal to the Environment Court which led to a year long "Accord Process". This process involved Waterfront Watch, Te Aro Heritage Trust and the Wellington Civic Trust in a series of meetings with LHML aimed at getting agreement on the future development of these three buildings. This Accord Process failed and the appeal was resubmitted to the Environment Court. In the end, LHML withdrew their case and the Court ruled that the Ambulance Building should stay in its present position.

During the Accord Process a consensus was reached that the Ambulance Building should be used to house the Film Archives and that Lion Brewery's proposal for Shed 21 was acceptable. The Odlin's Building proved to be difficult to solve in a way that was economically viable. In the end, the decision was left to LHML with the only agreement being *that its heritage values were to be retained*. It was for this reason that an earlier Athfield design, which incorporated louvres on the seaward side of the building, was rejected by all of the three appellants.

We now have another Athfield design which has no louvres but which, like its predecessor, gives little cognizance to the heritage values of this building. On the seaward façade, which is the side most visible to the public, any reference to the building as a waterfront warehouse has been completely removed.

This design has been issued with a non notified resource consent. The City Council's planning department has advised us that they considered the changes proposed in the new design to be "minor" and further, that they received the approval of your Committee. Hence it met the criteria stipulated in the Waterfront Framework for a non-notified application.

Because of the Accord Process, the Waterfront Leadership Group (which developed the Framework your committee is charged with implementing), was precluded from considering the future development of the three buildings on Taranaki Wharf. However, the Group was sufficiently concerned about these buildings to include them in the list of buildings which it considered had heritage value (p. 24). It noted that not

all the buildings were classified as heritage buildings in the District Plan and recommended that the Council “review its listings in light of the history of the waterfront” (p. 24).

The Civic Trust considers that the proposed changes constitute the destruction of the heritage values of this building. We are deeply concerned that such significant changes were not only considered “minor” by the Council’s planners, but that they, and the non-notified process, were considered acceptable by your Committee. Such action on the part of your Committee is especially concerning when considering the recent history of this building and the views and conditions set out in the Waterfront Framework.

We are aware that the Waterfront Development Committee had discussions with Athfield Architects about the design of the new Odmins proposal but to our knowledge these discussions did not cover the destruction of the heritage values on the seaward side. The lack of respect which this design shows to heritage values makes a mockery of all the efforts over the years to retain this building and, more recently, the efforts to keep the Ambulance Building in place to preserve the heritage value of the three buildings.

It is of particular concern to the Civic Trust that the radical workover of the seaward front of Odmins will in effect destroy the ‘group’ of heritage buildings by obliterating heritage detail from the central and dominating unit of the three. No consideration at all appears to have been given to the fact that the building was part of a group.

The Civic Trust is concerned that such a violation of the Waterfront Framework does not occur again. To this end we request clarification from you on the following questions:

1. What position did your Committee take regarding the preservation of the heritage values of this building?
2. What consideration was given to the impact of the new design on the heritage value of the group as a whole,
3. What weighting was given to heritage considerations, as opposed to design considerations, and
4. Was the Waterfront Development Committee consulted on whether or not to notify the application and, if so, what was the Committee’s response?

We look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely

Di Buchan  
Chair Wellington Civic Trust

Cc Keith McGavin, CEO, Wellington Waterfront Ltd  
Stephen Rainbow, Director Urban Planning, Wellington City Council