



## Project Paper 4 Ridgway Street – September 2022

This paper identifies and discusses the two key issues at 4 Ridgway Street, Whanganui (Part Section 548 – Reserve for local purposes – 970 meters – Crown Owned Land), forming a portion of Pukenamu Queens Park, Pukenamu.

### The Issues

1. The embankment requires stabilising as it is subsiding towards the river to the east.
2. The existing structure in front of the embankment known as the Repertory Theatre is adversely affected by the unstable bank. Additionally the building is not structurally stable and does not meet current compliance standards

This paper addresses each of these issues separately:

#### 1. Bank Stabilisation

##### What we know

The bank forms part of the eastern perimeter of Queens Park that also houses many significant community assets including the Sarjeant Gallery, War Memorial Building, Whanganui Regional Museum and various art facilities. Queens Park, Pukenamu is of significant cultural and heritage importance and is an iconic reserve for the Whanganui community. The park has an extensive Maori and European history for Whanganui.

The current work stream for Whanganui District Council includes developing an overarching landscape plan for the Queens Park area that respects its cultural and historic significance. The landscape plan will undertake extensive engagement with the community to form its final design. This work is due to commence late 2022.

The subsidence of the bank at the rear of the Repertory Theatre building has been ongoing for several years with the most recent partial remediation being undertaken in 2015.

##### Where we are now

The subsidence of the bank has adversely affected the structural integrity of the Repertory Theatre located immediately at its foot.

Further and more permanent stabilisation of the bank has been investigated and potential construction methodology developed and cost of works estimated.

The stabilisation of this area of the Queens Park bank has been estimated to cost \$200,000 and funding has been allocated in the FY 22/23 plan.

### **What we need to know**

The area of the bank that requires stabilisation forms more than a structural wall for the building in front, it is also in an area of cultural significance within Queens Park. Whanganui District Council is in the process of developing a complete landscape design for Queens Park that acknowledges the historical, cultural, archaeological and public use of the area. Before we are able to determine the final design of the embankment adjoining 4 Ridgway Street, consideration will need to be given to the overall landscape design currently being developed.

### **What happens next?**

The design of the embankment will be included in the Queens Park landscape design process and when the plan is agreed work will commence to be funded from the annual plan budget. Consideration will be given to the buildings that occupy Queens Park in the formation of the landscape design and this will include a discussion regarding any future plans for the Repertory Theatre.

The design and construction methodology will be determined by the final design. The timeline for the delivery of the draft plan for approval prior to November 2022.

There will be an opportunity for engagement in the drafting of the landscape plan which will be managed through the Whanganui District Council property team in the coming months.

## **2. The Repertory Theatre Building**

### **What we know**

The full history of the Repertory Theatre has been well document and repeated in the Conservation Report prepared by The Drawing Room. The report includes some reference to pre-colonial occupation of the area but does not fully address the cultural significance of the site upon which the building is located.

The existing building was initially built in 1876 and holds a 'B' heritage classification in the Whanganui District Plan with the notable heritage feature of the building being the street facing façade. The building does not qualify for national heritage status through Heritage New Zealand.

The building which was rebuilt behind the façade in 1957 is home to the Repertory Theatre Trust under a community lease from Council.

Maintenance over the past several decades has not been adequate enough to ensure the structural integrity or compliance of the building.

## **Where we are now**

During the past 15 years there have been numerous structural and compliance reports undertaken regarding for the building.

In summary the various reports have concluded that the building is earthquake prone at 27% NBS with further structural integrity issues caused by the subsidence of the Pukenuamu Queens Park bank at the rear of the building. Furthermore the building is not compliant for fire egress and does not meet current building standards. The building has deteriorated to a point where the Whanganui District Council must consider the long term plan for the both the building and the site it occupies.

There is currently no funding allocated in the Whanganui District Plan for the restoration/conservation of the Repertory Theatre.

The Repertory Theatre Trust which continues to advocate for funding to restore the building for current use.

The land upon which the building is located is crown owned reserve land designated for municipal buildings.

Recent discussions with iwi representatives have identified that the area has a long and significant history. To date there is little record of meaningful engagement with iwi in relation to the future use of the area 4 Ridgway St.

## **What we need to know**

Iwi aspirations for the site

Views of all stakeholders and community collated

What the options are for the building

How the Repertory Theatre Trust may fund any proposed restoration of the building

## **What happens next?**

In order to decide how the building will be treated Whanganui District Council will need to prepare a full case for change/business case taking into account all of the considerations described in this paper.

To do this Whanganui District Council will engage with users, and interested and affected parties to establish the detail required to allow Council to make an informed decision on the future of the building.

A project plan has been prepared and is attached outlining the proposed engagements and timeline for completion.

An agenda for regular discussions has also been included.

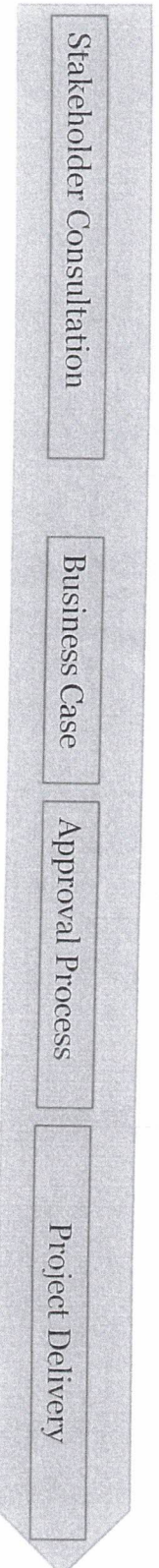
# Repertory Theatre Project Plan

Sept 2022

Dec 2022

Mar 2023

June 2023



## Engagement

Theatre Trustees

Tupoho

Performing Arts Representatives

Parks & Facilities

