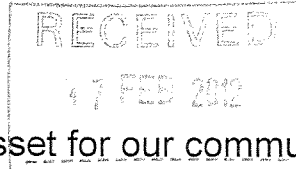




143 Manchester Street to 116 Lichfield Street.



Looking north along Manchester Street



TOWN HALL SUBMISSION

The Martinborough town hall is a valuable asset for our community. It has heritage value, having been a center for the community for 100 years. More important, with earthquake strengthening, renovation to improve the functioning of the various areas, and with a governance arrangement to give more proactive promotion of the facility it can generate community activity into the future. Part of Martinborough's quality of life is that there is a strong community, and for a community to be strong it must meet together and cooperate in activities. MADCAPS is a prime example.

It is likely to cost about \$2m to do the desirable work. At a meeting on this topic it was indicated that it would cost \$9m to replace. Strengthening and improving will give a valuable asset at much lower cost than an alternative facility. That expenditure does not need to be all at once.

David Bull
52 Kitchener Street

**SUBMISSION TO THE SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL
ON THE FUTURE OF THE MARTINBOROUGH TOWN HALL
MADE BY RICHARD RUDMAN
FEBRUARY 2012**

* would like to be heard.

[1] This submission is made by Richard Rudman, a former member of the Martinborough Community Board and briefly a member and chair of its Town Hall Committee.

The real question

[2] Legislative changes following the Christchurch earthquake have focused attention on the structural future of the town hall. However, this begs a bigger question. Does Martinborough need a town hall? If so, what features and facilities should it have? It would be good to address those questions before decisions are made about the future of the present building.

[3] The conservation plan reminds us that all the Wairarapa towns have a town hall or equivalent. It uses that fact to support retention of the Martinborough hall. Equally, it could be argued that there are enough civic halls in the district; that scarce resources would be better applied to maintaining and improving the existing facilities; and that Wairarapa people are accustomed to travelling between the towns to attend events and meetings.

[4] Martinborough has a number of halls (for example, St Andrew's, First Church, Hau Ariki Marae) which might benefit from more frequent use if the town hall were not available.

[5] Existing commercial facilities (for example, Circus Cinema) could be used for meetings and similar events, and the Council chambers are available for smaller meetings.

[6] The conservation plan describes present and past uses of the hall, but does not consider possible future uses. Similarly, the Council's options leaflet does not consider possible future uses, other than to propose the addition of a library and visitor's centre. Nowhere is there any discussion of the role of such buildings in the digital age.

[7] Social patterns and behaviour in the digital age probably mean that a major rethink of the traditional view of the town hall concept would be timely. It seems likely that the demand for traditional halls will, at best, change and probably diminish. It would be unwise to spend significant amounts of money on such a facility without careful consideration of its possible uses.

[8] Overall, it seems unlikely that the present building offers the best solutions for the future – for three main reasons:

- a. It is unlikely that it could be adapted to meet the community's future needs satisfactorily.
- b. Even if strengthened and refurbished along lines suggested in the options paper, it would always be an "old" building, with all the problems and challenges of such a structure.

- c. If there were a demonstrated need for a "town hall", it would be better to invest in a new building or buildings where (1) the development costs would be reasonably certain, and (2) the defined needs of the community could be addressed and met.

The conservation plan

[9] The conservation plan assumes that the Martinborough Town Hall is "an historic place" which merits being cared for and conserved, but does not make a convincing case for this proposition.

[10] The town hall may be old, but this does not automatically qualify it for historic or heritage status.

[11] There is no mention of the hall in the plan's quote from David Kernohan's *Wairarapa Buildings*. In Robyn MacIntyre's history of Martinborough, *The Canoes of Kupe*, the hall is mentioned as a venue for other events, but not discussed in its own right. Although it has been here for nearly a century, the hall has played only an incidental role in the town's affairs. It is part of the town's history, but not itself historic.

[12] The plan recommends that application be made to the Historic Places Trust for the hall to be listed on its register of historic places. I seem to remember that such an application was made some years ago, but declined by the Trust on the grounds that the building was of no particular historic or heritage significance. The plan offers no reason why the Trust should now take a different view.

[13] The plan notes that the hall is listed in the schedule of heritage properties in the Wairarapa Joint District Plan – which "affirms the cultural heritage significance" of the building. This schedule runs to 22 pages and the selection of items for inclusion appears to be based on the most general criteria. Inclusion on a list is surely not enough by itself to confer heritage status.

[14] The plan does not argue that the hall has any particular architectural significance or merit.

[15] The plan makes optimistic claims about the hall's usefulness. For example, it asserts that the "auditorium can seat between 300 and 400 people", but that overstates the hall's capacity. The Council's website says the auditorium can seat "218 people for a meeting or theatre or 152 for dining or cabaret". Obviously, that affects the practical and economic viability of the hall as an event venue.

[16] The plan also notes the hall's "acoustic suitability for orchestral and chamber music performance". People at last year's meeting to discuss the hall's future will recall that presenters had to be asked to speak up. They could not be heard a few rows back from the front of the auditorium. The hall's acoustics are not suitable for all occasions.

[17] The plan further claims that the hall is "an excellent venue for classical music concerts" and notes that the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra has performed there. However, when the Wellington Youth Orchestra played in the hall more recently, it was difficult to fit all members of that (small)

orchestra on the stage. It seems likely that fire safety restrictions had to be ignored to accommodate the numbers in the orchestra and the audience.

[18] Similarly, in following up on a suggestion that the touring company of the New Zealand Ballet might be invited to perform in the hall, I discovered that the current stage and back stage facilities meet almost none of that company's relatively modest requirements.

Building assessment

[19] Aspects of the conservation plan cause concern, and raise more questions than they provide answers.

[20] Both the conservation plan and the seismic assessment contain an historical catalogue of design changes and work recommendations for the hall. They also report that the documentation for the building is incomplete, as are records of what work has been carried out, and to what standards. As a result, it appears that the current knowledge of the state of the building and its structural integrity is, at best, incomplete. That is hardly a sound basis for the recommendations made in the conservation plan, and suggests that much more analysis and assessment will be needed before informed decisions can be taken with confidence.

[21] The perils of old buildings are well known to anyone who has attempted their repair or refurbishment. Such ventures are best approached as voyages of discovery, with no certainty of direction or outcome, or costs.

[22] The conservation plan is often hesitant when describing the state of the building fabric. For example, the description of the brick work (page 13) suggests that the plan's authors are not entirely confident about the nature of the structure or its integrity. It is, therefore, surprising that so much of the analysis is based on a core sample of a single brick (as the plan's author told the public meeting in November). Whatever the technical merits of basing an assessment of the whole building on a single component, the confidence placed in that sample is at odds with the anecdotal experiences of local trades people, who report having bricks crumble in their hands.

[23] In addition, the plan seems to believe that even more assessment is needed. For example, it suggests (page 13) that "it may be appropriate to select some trial areas to see if the brickwork could be effectively and economically returned to its original appearance without undermining the weathertightness of the building".

[24] Clearly, as the plan recommends, much more work needs to be done before a specific plan for the future of the hall can be developed and costed. Unfortunately, the lack of certainty in both the conservation plan and the seismic assessment cast doubts on the accuracy and reliability of the cost estimates in the options paper. We might also recall that, at November's public meeting, the author of the conservation plan himself questioned the reliability of any cost estimate for repairs to an old building.

[25] It would be prudent to delay decisions until the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Christchurch earthquakes have been published. New revelations from that inquiry are reported almost daily. For example, one structural engineer told the commission that he thought "structural walls comprised of bricks should be very seriously looked at as to whether they should be replaced". Bricks sat on top of each other in a lime mortar base, but would "flick upwards" in an earthquake with huge vertical accelerations, and could no longer do their job as a structural element (*Dominion Post*, 28 January 2012). The point here is not that one engineer is right and another wrong, but that new information is constantly emerging and new knowledge developing. It is possible that the Commission's findings will lead to further changes to legislative requirements and building standards.

Options 1 and 2

[26] I do not favour retention of the existing building, in whole or in part, for these principal reasons:

- a. However well it might be repaired and refurbished, it will always be an "old" building, with all the associated problems and challenges.
- b. It is unlikely that the existing building could be refurbished or rebuilt to provide flexible spaces and facilities for the community's future needs.
- c. The costs of repairs, refurbishment or rebuilding cannot be accurately calculated in advance. In effect, ratepayers would be asked to "sign a blank cheque". Assuming that the current cost estimates should be doubled, as has been suggested, the uncertain costs of repairs or refurbishment could prove to be higher than the cost of building an entirely new facility.

Option 3

[27] For the reasons given already, it would be unfortunate if the present town hall were simply to be replaced by a modern "look alike" with similar features and facilities.

[28] The community should give itself the opportunity to determine what facilities it needs and would, therefore, value and use. That exercise might take some time, and it might need to be carefully facilitated, and supported with information and ideas from outside. Advice might be sought from other communities (for example, Carterton) which have undertaken such exercises.

[29] To some extent, we are all influenced by our own preferences and experiences. We might need help to think "outside the box". For example, following the Christchurch earthquake, an emergency worker told me how fortunate they had been that the main hospital was relatively undamaged. Apparently, many of the local civic halls that were designated as emergency medical treatment and accommodation centres were badly damaged, and there would have been a major

problem if the hospital had been hit as well. On that basis, it seems to me that any new town hall should have the capability of being used in the event of civil emergencies.

Costs and funding

[30] At November's public meeting, a local resident asked for an estimate of the possible impact on rates of the likely costs of Options 1, 2 or 3. The response was that this would depend on whether costs were met from operating or capital budgets, and on the time period over which they were spread. While that was correct, it was also unhelpful.

[31] Simple and indicative calculations of the funding impact can be made. For example, if the total costs of the project were \$1 million and were funded entirely from borrowings at a rate of 6 per cent per annum, the annual interest cost alone would be \$60,000 – \$10 each for the district's almost 6000 ratepayers. That would increase to \$20 per annum for a \$2 million borrowing and \$30 for \$3 million. The capital amount would remain unpaid – and ultimately be a further liability for ratepayers (about \$500 each for 6000 ratepayers if the outstanding amount were \$3 million).

[32] In addition, any cost estimates should include projections for the costs of operating a new or refurbished hall. It seems reasonable to assume that such costs would be higher than the costs of operating the present building and, equally, that they would fall in some measure on ratepayers. It is difficult to imagine that the building could successfully be operated on a user-pays basis: the charges would have to be prohibitively high.

[33] One aspect of operating costs needs particular consideration. Following the Christchurch earthquakes, the availability and costs of insurance have become a significant issue. There is no consideration of this in the options paper.

16 February 2012



Richard Rudman
28 Grey St.
Martinsborough 5711
306 9431
✉ rudman@bolivar.co.nz



MARTINBOROUGH
BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION

14 November 2011

Jack Dowds
South Wairarapa District Council
Martinborough

Re Submission on the Martinborough Town Hall

Dear Jack

While the Town Hall is of great importance to many in Martinborough, the community should take this opportunity to reassess the needs of current and future users.

We do not wish to select any of Options 1, 2 or 3 as this decision should be made by the Councillors. However, we oppose Option 4 (demolition only). What we would like you to give consideration to is bringing together a number of disparate amenities around the town

Amenities to incorporate:

- A large room for sporting activities (indoor soccer for example)
- Consolidate the library, iSITE, toy library and Plunket rooms into the Town Hall
- Create a clear indoor-outdoor flow between the hall and the adjacent playground
- Add an outdoor stage for summer events
- Add a high speed broadband connection and professional meeting facilities for the growing number of small high-tech companies moving to town
- Consider the use of the Town Hall as 150-200 person conference centre for small conferences.

If sporting facilities are incorporated into the Town Hall, Pain Farm Funds could be appropriated for this element of the Town Hall.

Having a covered facility as a central point for community events and services is very important for the future of the Martinborough community. While appearance is important, it is the functionality and relationship of the facility to the town amenities that is of primary importance for its successful use.

Thanks for this opportunity to submit. If there is a hearing Conor Kershaw (Chair of the Martinborough Business Association) and myself would like to be heard.

PO Box 234 Martinborough 5741
email info@martinboroughnz.com
website www.martinboroughnz.com
twitter martinboroughba
facebook martinborough-business-association



MARTINBOROUGH
BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION

Regards
Frank Cornelissen
Deputy Chair, Martinborough Business Association

PO Box 234 Martinborough 5741
email info@martinboroughnz.com
website www.martinboroughnz.com
twitter [martinboroughba](https://twitter.com/martinboroughba)
facebook [martinborough-business-association](https://facebook.com/martinborough-business-association)

D.R. CUTLER

CONSULTING CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

previously practicing as DeTERTE & KERR-HISLOP

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ENGINEERS NEW ZEALAND

Principal

D. R. CUTLER, M.I.P.E.N.Z. (M.I.Struct E)

17 February 2012

The Chief Executive Officer
South Wairarapa District Council
P O Box 6
Martinborough 5741
WAIRARAPA

Ref: The Future of the Martinborough Town Hall, etc:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed a submission from Mr Denis and Mrs Pamela Cutler regarding the future of the Martinborough Town Hall.

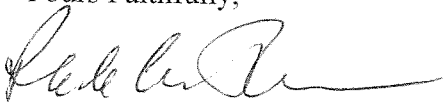
Our submission is based on my own personal fifty plus years in Consulting Engineering practices and spending the past twenty five years running my own practice as a Civil and Structural Engineer.

I have been joined by my wife Pamela in making the submission, and her background is largely based on her own experiences, but is influenced to some extent by her association with me and the fact that she has been an integral part of my Practice for many years.

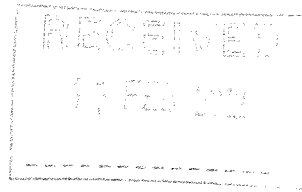
Because of my background, the submission is probably biased towards the structural integrity of buildings and the need for realistic costings in coming to a decision.

This submission is an edited version of one that we made to the South Wairarapa District Council on 16th November 2011.

Yours Faithfully,



Denis (and Pamela) Cutler:



63

PO BOX 19 (All Mail)
MARTINBOROUGH
SOUTH WAIRARAPA 5741

33 VENICE STREET
MARTINBOROUGH
PHONE 06 306 8855
FAX 06 306 8866
MOBILE 0274 457 032