

7. THE AIDANFIELD HERITAGE FARM BUILDINGS



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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the possible retention of the Group 2 listed heritage Farm Buildings at 20 Nash Road in the Aidanfield Stage 7 subdivision. The proposal considered is the possible purchase of the heritage buildings with the associated land. The report considers firstly matters relating to the buildings, then the land and finally overall citywide considerations.
2. The recommendation is that the land including the farm buildings not be acquired by Council as part of the Aidanfield subdivision.

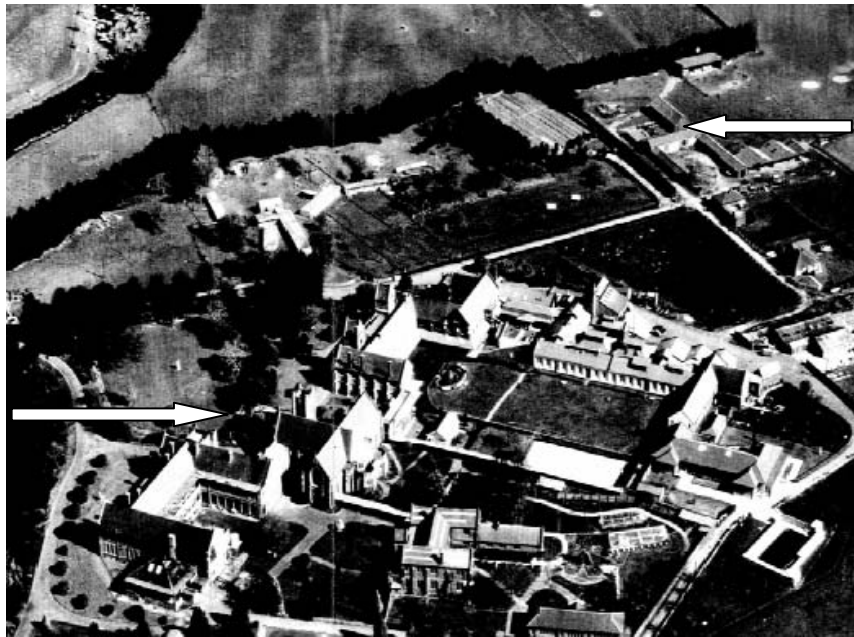
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Farm Buildings

Background to the site and buildings.

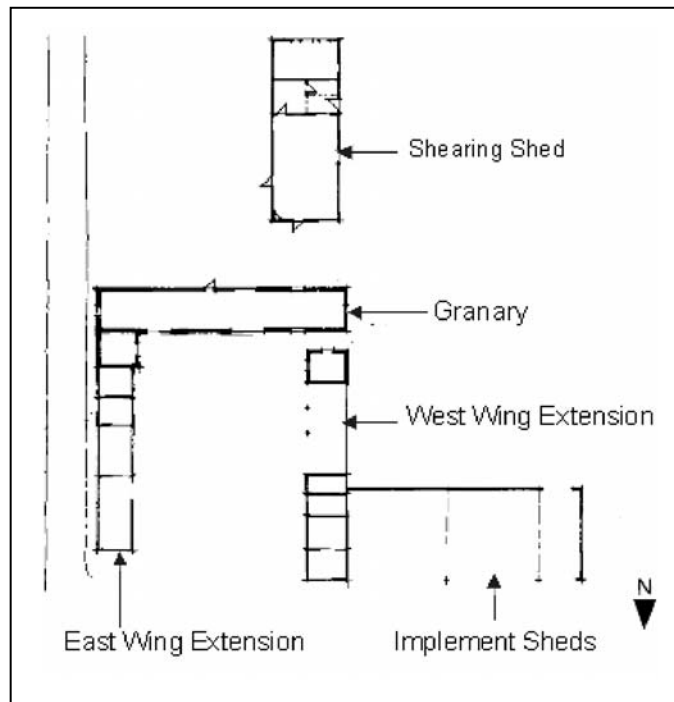
(Refer to the early aerial photo and plan of the farm complex included below)

3. The proposed Stage 7 of the Aidanfield subdivision is located in an area of land which in 1888 was the site where the Sisters of the Good Shepherd ran the Mount Magdala institution for eighty years. The institution provided social services and care for women. The complex included the Chapel, Convent, (subsequently the Hospital), a laundry, the cemetery and as a self-supporting institution, full farm facilities. The latter had, as a focus of activities, a number of farm buildings which adjoin the cemetery. Although the farm was in operation from 1888, the date of the various buildings has not been established except for the brick granary building which is dated 1900. The heritage and historic information relating to the farm buildings is included as Attachment 1.
4. The brick granary building is approximately 30 metres x 6 metres with two short brick extensions. These extensions to the granary building have been further extended by timber and corrugated iron structures approximately 20 and 25 metres respectively in length which create a 'U' shaped group of farm buildings which, being focussed around a central farm courtyard, are more typical of European farm 'steading' rather than of New Zealand farming practice. The farm buildings also include two large and one small open implement sheds. The sheds are approximately 25 x 11 metres in width, with substantial timber roof trusses and corrugated steel roofing.
5. There is a further building behind the granary which is approximately 20 metres x 8.5 metres, of timber and corrugated iron construction, which is known as the shearing shed. The interior of this building has been largely match-lined with timber.
6. Early photographs of the farm buildings, probably pre-WW1, show that the implement sheds were a later addition to the 'U' shaped set of buildings. The granary building had a first floor loft which has been removed, and a number of other subsequent changes. The generally very dilapidated condition of these buildings – apart from the granary, is identified in the Condition Report which is included as Attachment 2.



St John of God
Chapel

Farm Buildings



Aidanfield Heritage Farm Buildings

City Plan Heritage

7. The farm buildings are included in the City Plan, Part 10, Appendix 1 heritage listings as the St John of God Hospital Chapel including farm buildings. The heritage listing of all of the buildings in the complex is Group 2. The heritage listings are in four groups of heritage significance where Group 1 is of the highest significance. Group 2 heritage items are of national or regional importance. The farm buildings are not included in the Register of the Historic Places Trust. The only other heritage farm buildings listed in the City Plan are the remaining Deans' farm buildings on the site of the present Christchurch Boys' High School (Group 2), a hay barn at 190 Russley Rd (Group 3), a small brick fruit shed at 768 Marshland Road (Group 3), and a small dairy building at 24 Turners Road (Group 4) which has resource consent for demolition.
8. The St John of God (Mount Magdala) Farm buildings in their current form have high regional and moderate national heritage significance and therefore should be considered with the Deans' farm buildings to be the most significant heritage farm buildings remaining in Christchurch.

Heritage and Building Condition Assessments

9. In 2000 Aidanfield Holdings requested a heritage assessment of the farm buildings from the Council. A report was provided for this purpose which covered heritage, condition and potential uses. Subsequently, once the potential retention of all or some of the Farm Buildings in relation to the proposed subdivision and reserves contribution had been raised, further reports were commissioned which included the following reviews: -

Heritage Assessment: Heritage Management Services – Attachment 1

This heritage assessment details the history of the religious and social activities of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd from 1888 at the Mount Magdala site (subsequently transferred to the St John of God), and the important role the farming activities played in the life of the institution. The farm buildings were used for a wide range of agricultural activities and are, with the Chapel and cemetery, the only remaining buildings from this period. They have high regional and some national heritage significance.

Condition Report: Stewart Ross Team Architecture – Attachment 2

The condition report details the features, materials and condition for each building in the complex. Generally, with the exception of the brick granary, these buildings are in a very dilapidated condition and in the case of the implement sheds are deemed to be unrecoverable.

Structural Report Endel Lust Civil Engineer Ltd – Attachment 3

The report details the structural deficiencies in each building. The need for seismic strengthening of the brick granary is identified, though this would not be a requirement for some uses such as storage. The shearing shed has a problem with differential settlement, and the cost report includes an estimate for new foundations and floor. The lack of an effective connection between the walls and the roof has caused the external walls to spread apart at the top. Both of the northern extensions to the brick granary are in need of effective bracing and repair. The implement sheds are marginal in relation to structural integrity and may be dangerous.

Uses for the Buildings

10. There are no currently identified uses for the farm buildings, and the form of the buildings makes the options for future long-term use limited. The granary and shearing shed could be used as potential storage facilities. However, of the whole original St John of God (Mount Magdala) complex, only the Chapel, the cemetery and the farm buildings remain as evidence of this significant religious, social and farming institution associated with the original site. Under these circumstances the best approach which might be considered at this time for any possible retention of these buildings would be to stabilise and maintain them externally to an acceptable standard. The costs of this approach are included as Attachment 4.

11. The poor condition of the two timber and corrugated iron extension buildings to the north of the brick granary building, the costs of repair and external refurbishment, the lower potential for use and the fact that their retention would involve additional cost for a larger land parcel suggests that it is unlikely that retention of the extensions can be contemplated on practical grounds. The loss of these building extensions would however, destroy significant heritage aspects of the present group of farm buildings through the loss of the distinctive 'U' form of these buildings. The implement sheds are not as original or as flexible in potential function as the other buildings and are a potential safety hazard and are not considered suitable for retention.
12. The granary and shearing shed buildings have the most potential for retention.

Costs of Retention

Cost Report: Rawlinson's Ltd – Attachment 4

13. The cost estimates included with this report are only for the maintenance, security and exterior refurbishment of each of the buildings in the Farm complex, excluding the large implement sheds which are in a potentially dangerous condition and not considered further for retention. No uses have been identified for these buildings. Under these circumstances only the stabilising and external protection of the buildings has been addressed. The cost estimate provides for the replacement of all corrugated iron wall and roof cladding. With this type of estimating, the costs will be ball park only, but are properly on the side of caution, for example re-cladding costs provides for some structural repair and for exterior painting. A 10% contingency has been allowed for reflecting the lack of an accurate assessment being undertaken of the actual state of the heritage buildings.

Retention Costs for the Farm Buildings and Landscaping

14. The costs for the exterior refurbishment and stabilisation for the whole complex (being the granary, the shearing shed, and the two wing extensions but excluding the implement sheds (for safety reasons) has been estimated at \$220,000 inclusive of contingency and preliminary and general costs.
15. The works and associated costs for the full upgrading of some or all of these buildings and the associated site areas to make them serve a future use cannot be established without extensive investigations. To prepare the buildings to an initial minimum standard for possible use would require at the least, full structural upgrades, internal repairs, borer treatment, toilets, drainage, electrical reticulation and internal and external lighting fixtures, water supply, fire protection, amenity (including kitchen) facilities, additional glazing in the granary, disabled access, and landscaping. The costs of internal fit outs for specific uses would be in addition to the costs for bringing the buildings up to the minimum standard for use (but excluding the implement sheds).
16. The costs associated with the option to retain only the granary and the shearing shed buildings to an externally secure standard have been detailed in the cost report in Attachment 4. This includes costs related to an external refurbishment of the granary (items 1-8) and the shearing shed including foundations and floor (items 17-25), and the demolition of the implement sheds. This total would be \$112,590 excluding GST. Professional fees, contingency and preliminary and general costs for this option will be approximately 23% giving a total of \$138,485.
17. Future maintenance of the buildings and the site has been estimated at \$5,000 per annum. 'Rural' style landscaping and paths have been estimated at \$20,000, and security lighting at \$10,000. If any future uses other than storage were established, there may be an additional cost of a car park which could be in the order of \$40,000.
18. In summary the costs of protecting all the farm buildings excluding the implement sheds is \$250,000 plus the costs of ongoing maintenance. The costs of protecting the granary and shearing shed is \$170,000 plus the costs of ongoing maintenance.
19. The cost of a seismic upgrade to the granary as detailed in the structural report has not been included in the estimate because of the uncertainty over the need for this requirement. Attachment 3, the structural report, provides information on the type of approach for the seismic upgrading if required for the granary building which would be an additional cost.

The Land

Proposed Subdivision Development

20. The proposed Stage 7 of the Aidanfield subdivision is the subject of a current Resource Consent application. The subdivision covers the area of land which includes the St John of God (Mount Magdala) cemetery and the Farm Building complex. The proposed subdivision plan is included as Attachment 5. The subdivision plan provides for the potential retention of the entire farm building complex, including the implement sheds. All of the farm buildings except for the granary are also the subject of a current Resource Consent application for their demolition. Depending on the outcome of the resource consent for demolition, and any initiatives the Council or other parties may make for retention of the farm buildings in whole or in part, it is anticipated that the current version of the Subdivision Plan as attached may be subject to a further variation. The subdivision includes a road adjoining the Farm Buildings which are located on several land parcels at the western edge of the subdivision.
21. Negotiations with Aidanfield Holdings in relation to reserve land has however, been largely agreed with Council officers. The land associated with the heritage farm buildings is not the preferred location for reserves purposes. The cemetery provides a reserve in the immediate area, therefore the acquisition of the farm buildings and the associated land is most appropriately achieved by purchase of the land.
22. The costs of the land associated with the retention of the entire farm buildings is estimated at approximately \$722,000. The land costs associated with only the retention of the granary and shearing shed (1630 sq metres approximately) is estimated at \$450,000.
23. Costs have not been allowed for in any current budgets.

Overall considerations

The Farm Buildings and their Heritage values

24. The heritage importance of these farm buildings at a regional, and in part, at a national level is reflected in the City Plan listing as Group 2. Particular heritage significance is attached to the 'U' shaped form of the Granary building with the west and east extensions as a rare form of farm 'steading' in New Zealand. The implement sheds are in a potentially dangerous state and were also later additions to the complex, and have not been given further consideration. The form, timber construction and poor physical condition of the east and west extensions to the granary are constraints on their future use as would be the costs of stabilisation, external conservation and maintenance. The brick granary building is in a better condition than other buildings in the complex. If the granary building was to be retained with its associated land then the shearing shed should also be retained, for its unique architectural styling, possible earlier use on the Mount Magdala site and that laying to the south of the granary it would provide the link to the remainder of the proposed reserve land.
25. The retention of the shearing shed and the brick granary buildings only however would result in a reduction of their heritage value in comparison with retention of the whole original complex. The two buildings in themselves could justify, subject to detailed re-assessment, no more than a group 3 level of heritage significance. With regard to their present circumstances, protection would be through stabilisation, and external renovation. This is an acceptable conservation approach.

Summary of Initial Costs – Granary and Shearing Shed and Land Only

26.		
	Land Cost	\$450,000
	External Upgrade	138,485
	Landscaping	20,000
	Security lighting	10,000
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	Total Estimate	\$618,485
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Contribution to Local Identity

27. Greenfields residential subdivisions can result in the development of similar types of neighbourhoods lacking in any sense of special identity and place. In this instance these buildings do provide visual and historical interest and would contribute to a distinctive neighbourhood identity in the immediate locality in association with the cemetery which will be retained as reserve. The buildings would also provide a limited continuing historical association with Mount Magdala and the St John of God Chapel reflected in the naming of the subdivision as Aidanfield. The owners have not opposed the retention of these heritage buildings and the adjoining cemetery, and the co-location of these and their association with the other proposed reserve land could allow the retention of some rural context to the subdivision.

Risks

28. The initial costs which have been identified are considerable, and the future costs in bringing the buildings to a minimum standard for future possible uses cannot be meaningfully established without extensive additional investigations. There would also need to be an on-going means of protection of the buildings from vandalism. The potential costs and risks must be considered in relation to the reduced heritage significance of the place if only two of the buildings were to be retained. There is, as a consequence, a high level of risk in the retention of the two farm buildings particularly when account must also be taken of the future unquantifiable costs which will arise and the possibility that there may be no future uses for these buildings.

Conclusion

29. These heritage buildings have an important link to a major religious institution and its buildings which date from 1883. Of these buildings only the St John of God Chapel and the farm buildings remain, with the adjoining cemetery. Retention could be limited to the granary and the shearing shed buildings.
30. In relation to the loss of heritage significance, the lack of identified use, the present and future potential costs of land and building acquisition and the high degree of risk it would not appear to be justifiable to pursue the option of either retaining the whole of the remaining farm buildings or the alternative of retaining just the granary and shearing shed buildings.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

31. There is no provision in the 2007/08 Annual Plan or 2006-16 Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) for the costs of land purchase, the upgrading of any of the Farm Buildings or the annual maintenance costs of the land or buildings.
32. There is no current fund for purchase in a situation such as this. The Heritage Capital Purchases Fund allow for purchase for the purpose of on-selling to another party, but not for continuing ownership by the Council. Heritage grant funding is restricted to buildings in private ownership.

Do the Recommendations of this Report align with 2006-16 LTCCP budgets?

33. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

34. The LTCCP through the Local Government Act 2002 provides that a developer can be required to provide the Council with a Reserve Contribution either through the provision of land, cash in lieu or a combination of both. However, the reserves contribution does not include the land on which the buildings are situated. Therefore, the land and buildings cannot be acquired through this method on the proposal for reserves contributions.
35. The Council is under no legal obligation to purchase the land. To the extent that a sector of the community may challenge the Council's decision not to purchase the land and buildings, it is unlikely that such a challenge would succeed, as there is no legally enforceable duty requiring a Council to provide funding for such a purchase.

36. A further resource consent is required to permit the demolition of the buildings. A resource consent application has been lodged for this purpose, excluding the granary, but has yet to be determined by Council. Building Consent for demolition of the buildings is also required.
37. For the purpose of providing complete advice, it is possible for the Historic Places Trust to apply to the Environment Court to protect the buildings under a heritage order as per the provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991. However, there has been no suggestion that any such action is likely, or that the Historic Places Trust has the evidence to support such an action. The Historic Places Trust does not register the buildings as historic places.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

38. Yes. The applicant has accepted that the Farm buildings and associated land may be purchased for the purpose of retention and the subdivision plan provides for this option.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

39. Heritage protection is aligned to the Community Outcome 'An Attractive and Well-designed City'. This provides for, among other things, ensuring "our lifestyles and heritage are enhanced by our urban environment".
40. One of the objectives under the Strategic Direction Strong Communities provides for "protecting and promoting the heritage character and history of the city" (Goal 7, Objective 4).
41. 'City Development Activities and Services' aims to help improve Christchurch's urban environment among other things. One activity under City Development provides for Heritage Protection.
42. City Development Activities and Services provide for Reserves contributions through the Development Contributions Policy Part 3 s 4.1.1 Development Contributions.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?

43. No. While City Development includes, as an objective, the retention of heritage to be measured by the importance that Christchurch's heritage be retained for the future, this must be weighed against the fact that heritage retention, in this instance, would be unbudgeted for the 2006-16 LTCCP.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS)

44. Heritage development projects provide opportunities for increased commercial and residential activity in the City while at the same time enhancing the heritage townscape. The UDS considers heritage as an integral part of Christchurch and an aspect of growth management provided for is through the protection, maintenance and enhancement of heritage.

Christchurch City Plan

45. Heritage protection is consistent with the Heritage provisions of the City Plan. Volume 2, Part 4 which provides objectives and policies for Heritage protection.

New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

46. Heritage redevelopment projects improve the quality and design of the urban environment by protecting the heritage of the city, which is stated in the Protocol as being an attribute of successful towns and cities. The retention of Heritage will contribute towards the implementation of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, to which the Council is a signatory.

South-West Christchurch Area Plan (Draft)

47. Policy 3.2 provides for protection of priority heritage places in South-West Christchurch. Policy 3.5 provides for mechanisms to consider ways of incorporating heritage elements into new developments.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

48. Yes. While the recommendation does not provide for acquisition by the Council of the farm buildings as a means of heritage retention, the City Plan recognises that for Group 2 heritage buildings protection for these buildings is limited to where this can be reasonably achieved.

Consultation

49. No consultation requirements relate to the taking of reserves for a specific development or for the acquisition of specific heritage items by Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Board in reporting to Council considers the following staff recommendation:

- (a) Not to purchase land in the Aidanfield Stage 7 subdivision for the purpose of the retention of the heritage farm buildings at 20 Nash Road.

BACKGROUND (THE ISSUES)

50. The St John of God Farm buildings are part of a group of institutional buildings that collectively form a landmark in the area both in physical location and in the community consciousness being a significant remnant of the once extensive Mount Magdala complex. The buildings tangibly express the self-contained and self-sufficient principles that underpinned the institution. Together with the St. John of God Chapel and the (former) St. Joseph's Orphanage, the Farm Buildings contribute to an understanding of the extent of the Mount Magdala institution which occupied the site for eighty years. The Sisters continued their services on the site until 1996 when the Brothers of St John of God assumed responsibility.
51. The significance of the Mount Magdala institution to the character and history of the area is emphasised in the naming of the new subdivision - 'Aidanfield' - after Mother St. Aidan, one of the founding Sister's at Mount Magdala.
52. The farm buildings also illustrate the early European history of the use of land in this area for farming purposes. The composition of these farm buildings, a farm 'steading', is a type of layout where buildings are built to house animals and have allied structures set in such a manner as to provide a courtyard format. This is an uncommon format within New Zealand farming practice but reflects the relatively small scale 'self-sufficient' European model employed at Mount Magdala.
53. The complex includes three implement sheds which are open to the north and have no floors. While having heritage value, in relation to the whole farm building complex, they were later additions and a contemporary use in a residential setting may be difficult to justify. The heritage values of the two timber and corrugated iron extensions to the granary building are high with respect to the definition of the 'U' form and courtyard associated with the complex. These additions were in place in a photograph c1910. However, these extensions are in the poorest condition (apart from the implement sheds) and would add approximately \$60,000 to the overall costs. Internally, as far as can be determined, these buildings would appear to be very limited in their potential for uses other than storage, a demand which could be met by the retention of the granary and shearing shed buildings.
54. The brick and stone granary building originally had a loft which has been removed and a number of the openings have been bricked up. The building is dated 1900. Two short brick returns exist at each end of the building towards the north. These returns form the point where the timber and corrugated iron extensions connect to the granary.
55. The shearing shed is to the south west of the other buildings and appears to have been relocated to this site, but the date is not known. The highly unusual fenestration suggests that this building was not originally used for farm purposes and it may have been a schoolroom subsequently shifted to this site. The building has been extended to the south at some time. Apart from this extension the building is fully lined internally with timber.
56. The St John of God farm buildings are 300 metres from Canterbury Park. The farm complex might therefore have some limited relationship with other rural and sporting activities. This park was originally set up by the A&P Association for the A&P Show. The Council has since purchased most of the property (145ha), and established a range of equestrian and sports uses. Christchurch Riding for the Disabled, Halswell Pony Club, Christchurch Polo Club and Christchurch Rugby Football League are now established in the park.
57. The Aidanfield Stage 7 subdivision will create a new entrance for Canterbury Park on its western boundary. A new road will be created from Aidanfield Drive to Canterbury Park. The St John of God farm buildings are located on the corner of Aidanfield Drive and the new road.
58. The rural theme of Canterbury Park could therefore be enhanced by the preservation of this collection of agricultural buildings which tell a story of a pre-mechanised farm yard.

THE OBJECTIVES

59. To give consideration to the retention of all or a number of the farm buildings of considerable heritage significance for their association with the historic activities of the Mount Magdala institution for the Stage 7 Aidanfield subdivision by the purchase of associated land.

THE OPTIONS

60. The two options for consideration would be for Council to purchase all or some of the buildings and associated land for retention and re-use, or that the Council does not purchase the farm buildings and associated land.

THE PREFERRED OPTION

61. (Status Quo) That the Council does not purchase the farm buildings and associated land.

ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

The Preferred Option

62. (Status Quo) That the Council does not purchase the farm buildings and associated land.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Nil	Potential loss of recognition of important social links with the previous activities on the site.
Cultural	Nil	Potential loss of heritage buildings related to important historic activities associated with the site.
Environmental	Nil	None
Economic	Funding could be applied to other heritage retention projects.	None
<p>Extent to which community outcomes are achieved: Heritage comes under An Attractive and Well Designed City, which outcome states that “Christchurch has a vibrant centre, attractive neighbourhoods and well-designed transport networks. Our lifestyles and heritage are enhanced by our urban environment.” The success indicator is stated as being that “our heritage is protected for future generations” and progress will be measured by the number of heritage buildings, sites and objects. This measure would be decreased if the loss of these listed heritage buildings occurred.</p> <p>Impact on the Council’s capacity and responsibilities: Would not directly fail to meet Council’s heritage responsibilities, but that would be a potential outcome.</p> <p>Effects on Maori: Nil.</p> <p>Consistency with existing Council policies: Heritage retention is consistent with Heritage Conservation Policy and the City Plan Heritage Objective and policies, and while purchase by Council would be the most effective means of meeting Council heritage policy, this may not occur and the loss of the buildings as a result would be negative in relation to these policies.</p> <p>Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: Applicant has accepted potential for retention and reflected this in the subdivision plan. NZHPT, Civic Trust or community groups may oppose this option.</p> <p>Other relevant matters: The farm buildings excluding the granary are subject to a current Resource Consent application for demolition of the buildings and all the farm buildings will require a Building Consent for demolition.</p>		

Alternative Option 1

63. Council purchases all or some of the buildings and associated land for retention and re-use.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Protection of links to the past activities on the historic site.	None
Cultural	Retention of significant listed heritage buildings and a physical reminder of a major heritage institution.	None
Environmental	Provides an important contrast between old and new development.	None
Economic	None	Land and building costs from cash-in-lieu, unbudgeted costs of \$220,000 for external repair and stabilisation. Unbudgeted future costs for adaptive re-use and maintenance not able to be determined.
<p>Extent to which community outcomes are achieved: Heritage comes under An Attractive and Well Designed City. The success indicator is stated as being that "our heritage is protected for future generations" and progress will be measured by the number of heritage buildings, sites and objects. This measure would be maintained by the retention of these heritage buildings.</p> <p>Impact on the Council's capacity and responsibilities: Unbudgeted financial costs for repair and adaptive re-use of the buildings would impact on the Council's capacity to carry out other activities. Would meet Council responsibilities for Community Outcomes and heritage retention objectives and policies.</p> <p>Effects on Maori: Nil.</p> <p>Consistency with existing Council policies: Is consistent with Council Heritage objectives and policies.</p> <p>Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: Civic Trust, NZHPT likely to approve Council action.</p> <p>Other relevant matters: The farm buildings not including the granary are subject to a current Resource Consent application for demolition. The Resource Consent application does not include the granary. All the farm buildings require a Building Consent for demolition.</p>		