

5. FUTURE USE OF FORMER FENDALTON LIBRARY

Officer responsible Property Manager	Author Steve McCarroll, Property Projects Officer, DDI 3711-940
--	---

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the recommended future use of the former Fendalton Library and to seek a resolution to utilise the building for community/school purposes.

BACKGROUND

The Committee will be aware of the new development at the Fendalton Service Centre which incorporates the new Fendalton Library. The former library building is vacant and there is a need to determine its future use.

The availability of this property was circularised under the property decision-making flowchart with the Community Board, through the Community Advocate, providing details of the Board's proposed use which was reported to the Property and Projects Committee in September 2000. That report provided information on the wide range of community groups that were interested in utilising the building, as a result of the extensive community consultation process that was undertaken.

In September 2000 the Council resolved:

- 1. That the Fendalton/Advocacy Team prepare a further report for the Fendalton/Waimairi Committee Board's consideration on proposed layouts and expected development/operational costs, including the source of funds to develop the asset for a suitable community activity.*
- 2. That the costs and benefits of a community use to be compared with commercial uses for the building and be the subject of a comprehensive options report in accordance with the property decision making flowchart."*

The Council further resolved that:

"In the course of investigating the future options for the building, the officers also be requested to investigate the possibility of selling the building to the Fendalton School for a nominal sum, in return for the school agreeing to the continued use of the building for community activities."

Since September 2000 the Fendalton/Waimairi Advocacy team has completed its work with regard to layouts and costings.

The Property Unit has also obtained further historical information which confirms that when the library was first developed on land purchased from the Ministry of Education there was a clear understanding between the former Waimairi County Council and the Ministry that the facilities provided would be for both school and community use. Minutes from a meeting in 1964 of the former Waimairi County Council confirm that the intention was that any development on the land would be solely for the purposes of a community centre.

Subsequently an agreement was entered into (1968) between the Ministry of Education and the Waimairi District Council giving the school sole use during school hours and community use after hours of the community hall that was developed at the rear of the property. A "community centre" building was subsequently constructed on the front of the site and was utilised for the former Fendalton library, including initially the school library.

OPTIONS

For the reasons outlined in the background section of this report the options for the future use of this property are community based.

No other options such as suggested in resolution 2 of the September 2000 report can be considered for the use of this building.

In consideration of this fact and to satisfy the requirements of resolution one of the Council's September 2000 meeting – the Community Board/Advocate comment as follows:

"In May 2000 the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board agreed that the former library building should be retained for 'predominantly community use'. This position was taken following a community consultation process, input from representatives of the Fendalton School Board of Trustees, and consideration of the present usage arrangements for the adjacent Fendalton Community Hall.

The Board also resolved that a further report should be prepared for the purpose of evaluating design layouts (of the modified building), and determining expected development and operational costs, and sources of funding. In September 2000 the Council resolved along similar lines.

The Community Board has now given further consideration to the matter, including the establishment of a joint (Board/School) working party to look at the options for best (combined) use of the building. The working party has met and discussed the issues related to the utilisation of the building, and the adjacent Fendalton Hall. In summary of this discussion it would be fair to say that there is a further need to dialogue with the school before totally common ground can be reached (subject, of course, to the Council's decision in this matter).

The Board has, also, received information on the indicative costs associated with the conversion for community use. These are as follows:

<i>Capital Costs</i>	<i>\$242,500</i>
<i>Operational Costs(annual)</i>	<i>\$26,500</i>
<i>Business Costs(e.g. advertising, staff, phone)</i>	<i>\$9,000</i>
<i>Revenue (from casual hire-estimated)</i>	<i>\$5,500</i>

Source of Funding

The Council's draft "Unspecified" Community Facilities Fund – page 101 of 2000 Financial Plan (\$137,840 balance in 2000/01), and page 8.9.41(\$204,000 in 2001/02). This equates to a total budget of \$341,840 which is available for this project and two smaller non related projects that are estimated to cost \$80,000.

A further sum of \$12,000 has been earmarked for "car park" modification. This is represented by a Community Board project funded item, which has been carried forward from earlier years pending the final decision on the building.

The future of the building was most recently considered by the Community Board at its meeting on 3 April 2001, when it was resolved.

- 1 That the retention of the former Fendalton Library for predominantly community use be reaffirmed.*
- 2. That the interior layout plan for the building be adopted.*
- 3. That, if necessary, the joint (Board/School) working party continue to dialogue over the Fendalton School's utilisation of the facility."*

POSSIBLE SALE TO SCHOOL

As a result of the Council resolution of September 2000 detailed discussions were held with both the Principal of Fendalton School and Trust Board members with regard to the school's interest in purchasing this building.

A letter has since been received from the school advising:

"As a decile ten school we do not have surplus funds. Schools are funded according to their decile rating. This is set according to the perception of the socio-economic rating of the community. Decile 10 schools receive a significantly lower level of annual funding for school operations than low decile schools. We have a supportive school community who give generously but this money is essential for basic school operation and maintenance.

The decision as to the future of the vacated library will have a major impact on our school and its community. We look forward to the resolution of this matter so we can complete vital planning."

In a more recent letter to the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees has advised that the school's lack of operating funds does not necessarily mean that the school would not be able to raise the capital to buy the building, especially if it were offered at a nominal price.

The Community Advocate and the Property Unit have held detailed discussions with regard to this matter and consider it is not in the Council's best interest to consider a sale of the former library building for the following reasons:

- This report is recommending that this building be set aside for community/school use and to best control/facilitate this, ownership of the building should remain with the Council.
- There has been a wide range of interest from various community groups which strengthens the reasons to retain ownership of the building and to best accommodate their interests.
- The existing agreement is to be re-negotiated to better reflect an appropriate cost sharing arrangement with the school and therefore the Council should not be disadvantaged by continuing to own the building.

For the above reasons it is considered that no further consideration should be given by the Council to selling the former library building to the school for a nominal sum.

Costs Relating to Dual Use

The costs of community use are clearly a cost to the Council. The cost of school only use for some areas of the former library clearly do not have a wide community benefit and should be met by the school at normal commercial rates. This has been agreed in principle with the school.

The existing agreement for the hall requires the school to pay its share of "school use" related costs relating to electricity, maintenance etc on a cost recovery basis.

SUMMARY

The Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board's interest in retaining the former Fendalton Library building for community use has arisen as a result of widespread community consultation. As a result of this consultation a large number of community organisations have signalled their interest in utilising the building including the adjoining Fendalton primary school.

Investigations into the history of events surrounding the purchase of the land from the Ministry of Education and the subsequent construction of a hall and community centre on the site confirmed that it was the intention of the former Waimairi Council that the former library building was to be used for "community" purposes only. There is a clear moral and implied legal obligation that this will occur, hence no other options can be considered.

The exact nature of any proposed community use includes a specific interest from the Fendalton primary school with any sharing arrangements (including costs) to be determined.

For the reasons outlined above it is considered that there are two decisions to be made by the Council with regard to the future use of the former Fendalton Library building and the school hall at the rear of the site.

- 1 That due to historical factors, the former library building be set aside for community/school purposes.
2. That the arrangements for the cost sharing and shared use of the facility be determined by the Property Manager and the Community Advocate in consultation with the Trust Board of the Fendalton School, with any new agreement reached as a result of these negotiations to be in replacement of the existing 1968 agreement.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the former library building be set aside for community/school purposes.
 2. That the Property Manager and Community Advocate finalise arrangements with regard to renegotiating the 1968 agreement, with the Property Manager being given delegated authority to conclude these arrangements with the Trust Board of the Fendalton School on the basis of cost recovery and commercial rents as outlined in the report.
 3. That the Community Advocate be responsible for developing a business plan in consultation with the Property Unit for the use of the facility, with the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board being given delegated authority to approve the final plan.
 4. That no further consideration be given to the sale of the former library building to the Fendalton School for a nominal sum.

(Note: At its meeting on 20 November 2001 the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board resolved to support these recommendations.)

Chairman's Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.