



4 September 2025

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Tēnā koe Chris

WATER TOWER
18 Ruakiwi Road, Hamilton Lake, HAMILTON
List No. 4210 / Category II Historic Place

HNZPT SUPPORT LETTER - DECOMMISSIONING OF HISTORIC WATER TOWER, NEW ADJACENT WATER TANKS, AND LANDSCAPING

Thank you for contacting Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) regarding the proposed work around the Ruakiwi Reservoir in Hamilton. The proposal includes the decommissioning of the historic concrete water tower, removal of ancillary buildings around the tower, the extension of the existing designation on the site, the construction of two new low-profile water tanks, and the implementation of a new landscaping scheme to the entire site.

The historic and cultural significance of the concrete water tower is recognised through its listing as a Category 2 Historic Place on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangī Kōrero – Water Tower No. 4210. The structure is also scheduled as Category A Heritage structure in the Operative Hamilton City District Plan.

A Detailed Seismic Assessment (DSA) undertaken by WSP states that the current NBS% of the tower is <34% due to a poor base-to-wall connection which is vulnerable to sliding failure in a seismic event. If the tower is decommissioned it will cease to be an Importance Level (IL) 3-4 structure and instead become an IL2 structure, allowing for a lower NBS% to be achieved. Once decommissioned, the structure will be considered a monument under the Building Act 2004 and is therefore included in the Earthquake Prone Building Provisions within the Building Act. This requires the structure to be strengthened to >34% or be demolished within 25 years. The DSA recommends a strengthening approach which consists of a reinforced concrete perimeter ring beam around the inside circumference of the base of the lower reservoir wall. The strengthening work is entirely internal, with no elements externally visible. HNZPT considers this to be a positive outcome as the historic structure will be retained and strengthened for future generations to enjoy, even if it does lose its active use as a storage tank.

The two new low-profile tanks are recessed into the ground and feature sculptural elements in the form of corten steel cladding and patterned concrete blocks to their exterior to turn them into design features. There is also a boardwalk and connecting stairs/ramps, making them an integrated and accessible part of the landscape for the public to interact with and spatially enjoy. The overall design of the site makes it accessible and appealing to the public and makes a key feature of the historic water tower at its centre, which is a positive outcome for heritage appreciation and public visibility.



HNZPT would like to commend the applicant's' design team on a well-considered and thoroughly researched proposal which reactivates the site, champions heritage, and ensures sustainable future outcomes for water quality.

The documents presented and reviewed are:

- Memo from Chris Dawson, containing DSA (WSP) and HIA (Archifact), dated 28th August 2025.
- Appendix O2_Landscape, prepared by Brodie Hailwood (BHW) Landscape Designers, dated 25th July (Revision D) 2025.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga supports in-principle the proposed works, as outlined above.

To stay informed as the work progresses and to observe best practice guidelines, HNZPT suggests including the following conditions in the application:

- The Consent Holder shall consult with HNZPT regarding the final design plans for the proposed works, should they differ from what has been proposed and reviewed.
- An external paint coating system should be applied to the tower which will provide additional waterproofing protection to the structure, while masking the staining that has emerged on the exterior. A Graffiti Guard coating should also be applied over top of this to deter would-be vandals, as well as a biocide system to prevent microbiological growth from occurring.
- HNZPT encourages a lighting scheme to be introduced to the base of the tower which would make it more of a visual feature, while also providing additional safety benefits to the site in the hours of darkness, and deterring would-be vandals.
- HNZPT would like to be consulted on with regards to the interpretation panels which are proposed for the site as they relate to the historic water tower.

Thank you for contacting Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga regarding these works. If any further assistance is required or if there are any subsequent changes to the plans that may affect this support, please contact the HNZPT Lower Northern Office at info@lowernorthern@heritage.org.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

Ben Pick
Area Manager Lower Northern