**General Devonport Flats Body Corporate**

Devonport Flats constitutes a complex of three remarkable heritage buildings that deserves greater recognition for its historic, social and architectural importance . Here are some ideas on the future management of the Flats that we have quickly prepared for you.

1. Conservation Plan

We recommend that you get a conservation plan prepared by suitably-experienced heritage professionals. You should apply to Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga or the New Plymouth District Council for at least part of the funding. Expect it to cost between $10,000 and $20,000. This is a significant amount of money but there are many benefits that would arise from taking this step and these are as follows:

* The plan would contain a comprehensive history, which could be used for the centenary celebrations and other publicity and would greatly enhance general understanding of the buildings.
* The plan could be used to support applications to raise money from other sources for restoration, earthquake strengthening and repair works.
* The plan would contain useful information that could be incorporated into the buildings’ Long Term Maintenance Plan to meet the body corporate’s statutory requirements under the Unit Titles Act, in the form of high-level advice on maintenance and repair requirements.
* The plan would give you sensible policies for the care and maintenance of the heritage values of the buildings that could be used to help owners and occupiers look after them for the common good.
* The plan would identify those parts of the buildings that are most significant and should be protected from future change.
* The plan would include high-level advice from a suitably-experienced structural engineer on the buildings’ seismic requirements and any upgrading work that would be required to help ensure the long-term survival of the building.
* The plan would recommend a standard window design (and material – timber) to be used for each type of balcony opening on the buildings so that the building can be progressively brought to a uniform and more appropriate appearance. The present white aluminium joinery detracts from the appearance, aesthetic quality and heritage values of the building.
* The plan would recommend ways to tell the story of the building to owners, occupants and the general public through various media.
1. Interim policies

The following are examples of some policies that could be attached to the existing rules given to owners and occupants:

THAT individual owners must engage with the body corporate and / or seek suitable professional heritage advice to ensure that any internal changes are in keeping with the heritage values of the building, and not to carry out any changes to the flats without the prior written approval of the body corporate.

THAT no structural walls are altered without the approval of the body corporate. This may potentially include some of the walls inside the flats as well as the party walls and external walls.

THAT the body corporate makes and enforces a rule on the retention of original timber joinery units where these still exist (e.g. timber doors and windows, hot water cupboards, kitchen cabinetry of medicine cupboards).

THAT the body corporate identifies a way to provide group satellite tv reception in order to largely eliminate the present clutter of dishes on the roof and the preponderance of trailing wires fixed to the outside of the building (each fixing point is a likely future water leak into the fabric of the building).

THAT the body corporate will similarly identify a way to provide fibre and copper communications services to each flat in a way that eliminates as much external cabling as practicable.

THAT gas (either reticulated or bottled) should not be used anywhere in the building – for safety reasons and to prevent occupants from installing unsightly gas flues outside flats.

THAT no structures of any kind are fixed to any part of the outside of the building without the approval of the body corporate.

THAT the body corporate will establish an archive of information on the history of the flats accessible to all the occupants of the building and to the wider public (note: you could consider lodging any material you gather in Puke Ariki).

Michael Kelly, heritage consultant

Russell Murray, conservation architect