



Submission of Civic Trust Auckland

Resource Consent Application by PHVS Project Ltd for a proposed activity at 75 Victoria Street West, Auckland Central (Palace Hotel site)

1.0 Submitter Details

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Civic Trust Auckland is a non-profit public interest group, incorporated in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region.

The aims of the Trust include:

- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning for the city and region.

2.0 Application Details

Application number: R/LUC/2011/4511

Name of applicant: PHVS Project Ltd

Green Group, PO Box 105153 Auckland City, Auckland 1143, Attn: Martin Green

Address of proposed activity: 75 Victoria Street West, Auckland Central, 1010

Description of proposed activity: The proposal involves the construction of a 15 storey building at 75 Victoria Street West, Auckland Central. The building is proposed to contain food and beverage, entertainment and gathering (including a brothel), office and non-permanent accommodation activities. The proposal requires resource consent under the Auckland Council District Plan (Central Area Section 2004) for construction of a new building, provision of non-permanent accommodation, signs, loading space requirements, and modification to a heritage site. Overall, the proposal requires resource consent for a restricted discretionary activity.

3.0 Submission Details

3.1 Our submission opposes the application.

3.2 The resource consent application involves the construction of a 15-storey building at 75 Victoria Street West, Auckland Central. The site was originally the site of the Aurora Hotel, constructed in 1878. The site was scheduled in the District Plan as Category B and registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as Category II.

3.3 The application was fully notified due to the special circumstances of the application and the high level of public interest:

3.4 The Palace Hotel Building on the site, a three-storey building, was due to be retained and developed. This building was demolished due to the questionable actions of the owners, and its heritage amenity has been lost to the Auckland community.

3.5 The District Plan allows for a 15-storey building to be built on this site, if this site is vacant. The site is currently vacant due to the enforced demolition of the damaged Palace Hotel building.

3.6 The site remains scheduled. One of the reasons for the scheduling is the significant contribution the Aurora Hotel made to the continuity of the streetscape. The streetscape running eastwards is of low-scale buildings. The properties at 51 - 67 Victoria St West and 66 - 68 Victoria St West are subject to the limitation of a character overlay.

3.7 A building of six stories would be more appropriate in the context of the streetscape of this part of Victoria Street. On the opposite side of Federal Street directly to the west of the site is the Victoria City Apartments building. A new building of somewhere between three and eight stories would represent a better modulation of height from this corner down to the buildings of two stories to the east.

3.8 The resource consent granted to the applicant in September 2010 involved alterations to the building which did not extend above the height of the roof of the Palace Hotel. That was the scale of the development planned by the owners at the time.

3.9 The applicant has proposed a full redevelopment of the site that maximises the potential floor area on the site.

3.10 The owners of this site have not been penalised for the destruction of part of Auckland's heritage. The granting of the resource consent for a 15-storey building would have the effect of rewarding the owners.

3.11 Civic Trust Auckland opposes the granting of this resource consent as currently proposed.

3.12 In terms of design and appearance, we object to the scale of the proposed development, notwithstanding the district plan potential for a building of such a scale. We consider that in order to modulate between the eight-storey Victoria City Apartments to the west and two-storey buildings to the east of the subject site, a building of some six stories would be more appropriate.

3.13 Furthermore, we consider that any building that may be erected in place of the Palace Hotel should employ design details sympathetic to the historic context of the site, particularly its neighboring character buildings.

4.0 Submission at the hearing

We do not wish to speak in support of our submission.

Signature:



Date: 4 May 2012