



## **Feedback of Civic Trust Auckland on the Leys Institute, Ponsonby – Heritage restoration, seismic remediation & modernisation**

- 1.0 Civic Trust Auckland is one of Auckland Council's regional stakeholders. We submit on a range of matters that are relevant to our aims. We have submitted on the Leys Institute over the last few years.
- 2.0 In our submission on Council's Annual Budget 2020/21 on 22 March 2020, under Waitemata Local Board Priorities - Local Community Services Community Services, we submitted as follows:

*“Local Boards are meant to maintain communities’ local libraries and halls and so Civic Trust is saddened to see the Leys Institute and Gymnasium closed recently due to seismic issues. It is a building of local and regional, as well as national heritage significance. The plight of this building is similar to many in both Auckland and around the country. The financial impact of upgrading the country's earthquake-prone buildings is likely to exceed the impact of the so-called 'leaky building crisis'. Though remediation of the problem will need to be facilitated by Council, the Waitemata Local Board could usefully make budgetary provision for investigation of options for the site.”*

- 2.1 Later that year, on 19 June, in our submission on the Auckland Council Emergency Budget 2020/2021, under “Capital Expenditure,” we wrote:

*“We wish Council to proceed with work to seismically upgrade the Leys Institute and Gymnasium so that all community activities previously catered for there can return to the site of these significant heritage buildings.”*

- 2.2 Also in 2020, we submitted on 13 August on the Waitemata Local Board Plan 2020 as follows:

*“The Local Board Plan proposes the WLB will treasure and protect our heritage buildings and structure by advocating for funding to remediate our heritage buildings in the 10-year budget, particularly the restoration of the Leys Institute as a public library. We strongly support the restoration of the Leys Institute Library and Gymnasium and submit that this should be advanced as part of a comprehensive site development in which the provision of public amenity is the primary criteria over and above any peripheral property development potential.”*

- 2.3 Our submission on Council's Long Term Plan (2021-2031) on 22 March, 2021 said:

*“In terms of the key issue 1 in the budget, the proposed investment package, we support under 'Parks and Communities' the focus on the Leys Institute and we support the expenditure of sufficient public funds to ensure that project is completed.”*

- 3.0 CTA is very pleased that Council will be preserving and upgrading the Leys Institute. Now that there are two options presented for public submission, we would like to voice our support for Option 1. This design included community input, which we regard as a factor of prime importance in all Council consultations.
- 4.0 We note that the buildings, being listed Category 1 are of not just local but also of national heritage significance. The development of options would have benefited from wider input, notwithstanding the involvement of Heritage New Zealand.
- 5.0 We recognise that for locals, the Leys is not only an important heritage building but a community facility, in particular a library and a community space that has been well used in the past, including by our organisation. In the Option 1 design, the facility has flexibility for future community needs and provides even more space, including generous storage spaces for groups (sometimes lacking in other Council facilities) and good workspaces for library staff.
- 6.1 We appreciate the restoration of original heritage features and opening up heritage parts of the building that have not previously been accessible to the public.
- 6.2 We appreciate the retention of the large deciduous tree (pictured).



- 6.3 We support linking the library with the gymnasium and accessibility to all parts of the facility.
- 7.0 Civic Trust Auckland supports the restoration of the Leys Institute Library and Gymnasium, and notwithstanding our support for Option 1, as previously submitted, we consider this should be progressed as part of a comprehensive master plan for development of the site (outlined in red overleaf).
- 8.0 We note that in terms of funding of the development of the site, 19 Jervois Road (owned by Auckland Council and outlined in yellow overleaf), is to be sold, with sale proceeds being allocated to help fund the Leys Institute redevelopment works. We understand that Council may also be considering a targeted rate to assist with funding. We suggest that clearer articulation of the masterplan for the whole site would help underpin any potential support for such a method of funding.



9.0 We recognise the strong support from locals and those further afield in Auckland, some of whom are pictured below outside the building in February 2020, including CTA members, and we commend those involved in the restoration, seismic remediation and modernisation of this community facility for future generations.



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