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### Council agrees to compromise allowing development above Wong Doo building

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The Auckland Council resolved yesterday to conclude a settlement agreement with Dae Ju Housing Co Ltd which will enable the partial retention of the Wong Doo building at the corner of Hobson & Cook Sts and development of an 82-unit apartment block above it.

The new building would be cantilevered over the Hobson St frontage of the Wong Doo building (last occupied as Canvas City), but set back from the Cook St frontage (which I see I've sometimes previously referred to as being on Mayoral Drive, a road which starts a block away).

The fate of the old building has been in the balance since April 2005, when Dae Ju was about to demolish what was then Canvas City to make way for a 259-unit apartment block. Although Dae Ju had consent to demolish some neighbouring old buildings, an Auckland City Council committee put an ultimatum to the company when it sought consent to demolish Canvas City: Agree to hold off & consider incorporating existing buildings in the new development, or have the application publicly notified.

Dae Ju held off the Canvas City part of the project, splitting the development into 2 parts, building the 18-storey 146-unit Fiore apartment block at 152-160 Hobson St and entering a 7-year battle to develop the corner site at 164-168 Hobson St, across the road from the Central Police Station.

Under the settlement agreement which the council approved yesterday, the council will modify its heritage notice - notified on April to prevent demolition - and issue a new resource consent for partial demolition. The council will pay the costs associated with the heads of agreement from its heritage acquisition fund.

Precise details on retention costs haven't been disclosed. Although the subject was on the council's open agenda yesterday, some of the detail was put in the confidential section of the agenda. Planning consultant Mark Vinall said in his report that Dae Ju believed the council had under-estimated the cost of retention. Those figures and details of valuation & quantity surveyor feasibility studies were kept confidential in a separate report.

Dae Ju proposed a 14-storey serviced apartment building for the corner site, containing 84 one- & 2-bedroom units and a single level of basement parking accessed from Cook St. It would have had commercial floorspace at the ground & first-floor levels.

To retain the whole of the Wong Doo building, the council proposed an L-shaped development, 14 levels, 72 apartments, no basement, commercial & retail on the ground & level 1.

The compromise is a 14-storey building containing 82 one-bedroom apartments, with a partial basement outside the Wong Doo footprint for storage & utilities.

#### The floor area differences are:

- Dae Ju's proposal, 6494m<sup>2</sup> above ground, representing 84.8% of the maximum site gross floor area of 7657m<sup>2</sup>
- Council proposal, 5697m<sup>2</sup>, 74.4%, difference of 797m<sup>2</sup> but this scheme could have claimed a (marketable) 2008m<sup>2</sup> heritage floorspace bonus
- Compromise, 6345m<sup>2</sup> above ground, 82.8%, difference of 149m<sup>2</sup>.

Mr Vinall said in his report the compromise proposal would retain the whole of the exterior &

interior of the corner shop tenancy at both levels, and the full shop frontages on Hobson St, but the 2 rear tenancies on Hobson St would be demolished, although the ground-floor spaces within then "can generally be reconstructed to the current configuration". The existing upper-floor level would be reconstructed to a varying depth of 4-6m.

The compromise gets the council out of having to buy the old building and also saves an estimated \$2-300,000 for an Environment Court hearing on the council's notice of requirement for a permanent heritage order.

But Dae Ju still wants the council to take contractual responsibility for the heritage component of the project, saying the company has little experience in working with heritage buildings.

The Wong Doo building was constructed in 1885 with shop space at ground level, living areas behind & bedrooms above. It had load-bearing un-reinforced masonry with timber-framed floors & walls.

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