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Memorandum

Project No.:

To: RANGITIKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL

Date: 2021-05-13

Project Name: TAIHAPE GRANDSTAND

Client Ref:

Regarding: LONG TERM PLAN – OPTIONS TO INVEST IN RESTORATION OR A NEW BUILDING

Mayor Andy, Members of Council, Council Staff and Rangitikei Ratepayers

My name is Paul Marcroft. I am an Architect, a Marton resident since 2007 and am supportive of the idea to invest in the restoration and refitting of the Grandstand. I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Options.

I first visited the grandstand when I was looking for a place to eat my sandwiches. It was a lovely fine day and I was immediately struck by the charm of the building, its timber structure, its unfussy honest appearance and most of all by how well it suited the playing field in front of it. Since then I have thought more about why it is a very likable building and I offer you some brief thoughts on the likableness of its format and siting, its materials, scale and presence.

1. Format

The format of the place is that of a sports field, the players, the referees and lines people and the spectators. It is a space for people of all shapes and sizes to come together to express their human character and identity in a physical way away from the daily grind and the solitude of rural living. This in Aotearoa NZ is highly valued culture.

2. Siting

In my opinion the building could not have been positioned better than it has been. The stand faces E-NE open to the morning sun and has its back to the SW and its right backside cheek to the SE and its left cheek splits the prevailing NW air flow to provide shelter to the spectators. Its elevation above the playing field is extremely good neither too high nor too low, and the slope of its bleachers gives everybody good views across the field.

3. Materials

The structure is largely timber from native timbers probably milled from the Taihape hinterland. Because the structure has endured for roughly 96 years the timbers used would have been good heartwood members. In some ways the building memorialises the forests from which those timbers came, and the carbon that was captured by those trees is still being used for a worthy purpose. Timber is a likeable organic material that has many tactile qualities that kiwis appreciate. Like all building materials timber requires maintenance and when it is given some love and attention the payoff is immediate and rewarding.

4. Scale

The scale of the grandstand is smallish. Perfectly sized for a small rural town and without pretensions. Unlike larger stadia an individual sitting in the Taihape grandstand does not become lost in a sea of faces.

5. Presence of History

Many have discussed the historical connection of the grandstand to the town and its significance beyond Taihape to Aotearoa NZ as a reminder of an egalitarian culture that was deeply rooted in both town and country. Sport is one of the things that kiwis of all flavours have united behind. Sport is still a focus of local community identity, of celebrating leaders and teams who are prepared to "give it a go" and to test themselves against their neighbours.

However – I'm a little bit uncomfortable with framing the development of Memorial Park as *either* the Grandstand or the new Amenities building. I understand that budgets have their ceilings and that framing the question in this way encourages the public to discuss and debate the ideas. Personally I like to have my sandwiches and eat them. I think new and old can co-exist happily together and can complement each other. In this case a comprehensive redevelopment of the site should include for things that cannot be fitted into the Grandstand, and lay out a process of staging the development to achieve as many of the needs as can be. This may mean some sensitively considered additions or adjacent facilities. The nearby toilet block for instance could be made more likable.

I strongly believe that Taihape's grandstand can be revitalised and given a new lease of life - that will not only suit current community needs, but will reflect a level of pride in a special Central North Island town. Towns such as Napier and Hastings are now reaping the benefits of identifying likable (Art Deco) architecture and investing in their preservation and adaptation for current needs. There is a lot of likeable architecture (and bridges & roads) in the Rangitikei. It's pretty easy to identify, but requires deft and skillful leadership to encourage people to see the rewards that are waiting - to discover resources and to unite people to "give it a go" and strive for an outcome that locals and visitors to the town will appreciate.

I thank you for your consideration. Ma te Ariki koe e manaaki E arahi (May the Lord bless you and guide you).

Signed (Architect) For **TRINITYARTS LTD**

