

Speaking Notes – Quarry Hearing 13.6.25

Notes prepared by Simon Brew, Cambridge Town Hall.

Kia ora koutou

Thank you for allowing me to speak again.

This is my second appearance before the panel. When I spoke last, there were no proposed conditions available around through traffic in Cambridge. Since then, the applicant has submitted a revised set of draft conditions. I am here today to respond to those — and to outline why, in my view, the conditions do not adequately avoid or mitigate effects on the Cambridge Town Hall and its surrounds. These effects and concerns were noise pollution, vibration, heavy vehicle traffic and the potential economic impact from these on the hall.

To reiterate, we still do not oppose the quarry, we opposed the traffic and vehicle direction of movement, as a result of the quarry.

So, to start I also want to acknowledge my colleagues at the council for the role they have played in collating, processing, and passing on the applicant's material in a neutral and procedural capacity. And for keeping us up to date. I understand it is not their role to advocate for or against an application, and I respect that.

To begin, the WDC notification decision found that the effects associated with transport are potentially more than minor and required to be notified. Subsequent WDC draft conditions relating to Cambridge through traffic, were directed 'To Be Determined at the hearing subject to further evidence.' For the Town Hall, and to my reading, no evidence has been supplied in response to the effects raised in the Town Halls submission and the post-hearing draft conditions, now offered, do not mitigate the potential or actual risks/effects on the Cambridge Town Hall.

So, a couple of points or questions I have.

1. Conditions Are Not Sufficiently Specific or Enforceable

So, I would question if the current conditions, specifically condition 28, meet the typically required consent conditions. As I understand the RMA does not specifically define SMART conditions, but best practice in planning (including guidance from the Ministry for the Environment and Environment Court case law) expects that conditions be so.

As I read them, many of the traffic-related conditions in the current draft supplied by the applicant seem vague and nonspecific. For example, language such as "*best endeavours*" to avoid the Cambridge town centre is not enforceable, and there are no binding prohibitions on truck use of sensitive routes like Victoria or Queen Street.

2. The Consent's Approach to Traffic Is Reactive, Not Preventative

Under the current draft, HCV movements through Cambridge will only be reviewed after a threshold is breached.

I suppose I would question if this were a preventative or effects-based approach? My reading understand that it allows potential degradation of the town centre and the area around the Cambridge Town Hall's environment before any action is triggered.

My challenges under S5 of the RMA, is, are the effects on community well-being, amenity values and the quality of the environment being adequately considered proactively. To me, the approach is not preventative or proactive, meaning adverse effects could occur for up to 2 years before review.

3. No Binding Routing Restriction Has Been Offered

Despite acknowledged concerns from submitters, there is no binding condition that prohibits or limits quarry HCVs from using the Cambridge town centre route. Instead, the applicant proposes that they will "encourage" use of the Karāpiro Interchange if and when it becomes operational.

I would hope a binding routing condition would be more effective where consents involving HCV-intensive activities near sensitive sites.

In short, the "best endeavours" language for using Karāpiro is non-binding, fails to address the effect raised in our submission, and actual routing restrictions should apply from the start — not be contingent on future infrastructure upgrades.

4. The Lack of a Northbound Connection is an NZTA Deficiency - Not the Town Hall's Responsibility

At the previous hearing, the panel rightly noted that the current road layout south of the quarry — particularly the need for HCVs to turn around to head north — poses potential safety risks. This is a deficiency in NZTA's network design, stemming from the lack of a northbound on-ramp.

While a Karāpiro Interchange may eventually be constructed, this remains uncertain and several years away. In my understanding of how the RMA works, and I note there are many more knowledgeable and experts in the room, but the absence of suitable roading infrastructure is not the Town Hall's responsibility and should not be used to justify weaker or delayed mitigation of traffic effects.

I would ask that, external deficiency should not be allowed to create new or compounding/cumulative effects on a sensitive community asset like the Town Hall.

5. The Augier Principle and Volunteered Conditions

I wonder if the Augier Principle can be explored, that an applicant may offer enforceable conditions in return for approval of a consent. And as I understand, these conditions can go beyond what a consent authority or council could otherwise impose.

They can and could formalise this through enforceable conditions that are realistic, achievable commitments that would mitigate known effects.

This would offer a more precautionary approach to addressing the effects.

6. Summary and Request

As General Manager, acting on behalf of my Board and under our Lease and Service Agreement with Waipā District Council, I hold a responsibility that is both practical and symbolic. It is my

role to speak for a building - one that holds historical, cultural, and civic value for our community. Others may treat it as background, but for us, it is a living, working venue - a space relied upon by hundreds of groups, events, and people. My job is to ensure it remains protected, respected, and viable for future generations. Increased compounding and cumulative heavy vehicles present issues for us.

To quickly return to the topic of “venue red flags” I mentioned last time I spoke - in truth, everyone in this room is a kind of venue expert. We’ve all been at events where disruption pulls focus: a beeping door, a flickering light, a squeaky chair, rain on the roof, or road noise cutting through a performance – be it a professional event at a high-ticket price or a school performance, prizegiving or public address. You don’t need to be an expert to know these things matter – we have, or you have all experienced them.

But the key difference is that while most people simply notice them, it’s the job of venue and event managers to anticipate them. My team and I are responsible for anticipating these issues before they happen - across hundreds of events, in a heritage building, with all the complexity that brings. These are the realities of events and venues. Hence, I am here sharing the risks and effects we are deeply concerned about.

So, I respectfully request that the panel - unless more satisfactory conditions are tabled by the applicant, ones which go beyond vague commitments - consider the conditions as currently drafted in Condition 28., to be inadequate. If stronger, clearer conditions are offered, I will gladly step aside. But until then, I must continue to advocate for the hall and the people who use it.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak again.