



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

Save it, or scrap it? The future of Wellington Central Library

A public meeting will be held next week to discuss the fate of Wellington Central Library, which is closed while the city council considers what to do with the seismically vulnerable building.

The meeting, which will take place on Monday 15 July at 6pm in the auditorium of the National Library, 70 Molesworth Street, has been organised by the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Angela Foster, chair of the Institute's Wellington branch, said the event is a response to concerns that the mayor and council are contemplating the demolition of the 30-year-old building.

"The Central Library is an important building, and one that is fondly regarded by Wellingtonians," Foster said. "It is a valuable civic resource, an iconic element in the cityscape, and an outstanding work by the most celebrated Wellington architect of the past 50 years, Sir Ian Athfield."

"It is totally appropriate that the library has been closed while its condition is appraised, but it is essential that all options for its future are properly investigated and honestly compared."

"Saving and rehabilitating the library is one of the options. It may well be possible to do this, and because adaptation of an existing building is a more sustainable solution than demolition and replacement, this option would be consistent with the Council's goal of a 'zero-carbon capital city'."

The public meeting will feature presentations addressing the Central Library's design history and architectural significance, and its structural condition and possible means of remediation.

The speakers will be Gordon Moller, a past-President and Gold Medallist of the Institute of Architects and an architect of Wellington's Civic Square; Ken Davis, an architect who worked on the Central Library project; Adam Thornton, a founder of engineering firm Dunning Thornton and one of New Zealand's most accomplished structural engineers; and City Councillor Iona Pannett, Portfolio Lead: Infrastructure and Sustainability, Wellington City Council.

The meeting will be chaired by Judi Keith-Brown, President-Elect of the Institute of Architects.

When: Monday 15 July, 6pm – 7.30pm

Where: Auditorium, National Library, 70 Molesworth Street, Thorndon, Wellington

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