

The Mayor
Jeremy Dwyer
Hastings District Council

An open letter

Re: Relocation of the Visitor Information centre.

We understand members of the Hastings Tourist Trust have decided to relocate the Visitors Information Centre.

This decision is to be commended, and not before time. We also understand that the "Westermans Building" was considered, but did not meet favourably with the trustees, why? If this is correct, can the trustees give us as good enough reason for not using Westermans? As we offer reasons from the retailers, the public and citizens of Hastings as to why Westermans should be used, rather than a new and costly building, without any historical significance and character.

Our reasons are many and varied and practicable and are given as follows. Visual location, easily located from both the North and south approaches.

Visitors are frequently seen asking as to where they can find the Visitor Information Centre, therefore telling us where it should be. Westermans is as near as practical to the city centre, the first thing visitors require are close proximity to public car parks, toilets, tea rooms, art centre, library, etc, etc. The two car parks are large enough to accommodate the tourist coaches, caravans etc. Russell Street north and south can also accommodate temporary bus stops. Two-way access, we understand is also being contemplated.

Westermans is the most photographed building in the central city as is the T & G building in Napier. With its rare Spanish architectural theme it is a gem wasted when it should be used to promote tourism as a feature of Hastings, with the rest of the historical Spanish and art deco buildings in close proximity, just stand back and look and admire and visualise its potential.

This building and the update of the Mall and its surrounds could and should be the showcase of the future Hastings. Don't lose the opportunity, when it could give back its sense of true worth that has been lost over recent years. It will help to attract new retailers with new ideas to compliment both the mall and the visitor information centre.

The idea of combining a travel centre with Transrail in the hope that Transrail would relocate is ludicrous. They are foreign owned and never heard of Hastings let alone have any interest in our aspirations for Hastings or its citizens and if they did they would clean up the shed that is used at present as a railway station to drop of 30 - 40 passengers a week. Transrail does not care. The train service is never going to be what it was 30 years ago with a full compliment of passengers, except perhaps for the

Blossom Festival. The modern traveller to Hastings is by coach, car and caravan, not rail.

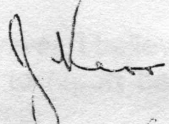
The uses that can be made of Westermans are many and varied, not only as visitor information centre, but as a art deco shop, display centre for our produce, i.e. Wine, fruit bowl, sports, tours, postal services etc, etc. It is never ending and with the vast window displays that could be available to let, use the upstairs for conferences, up market dinning, which is sadly lacking in Hastings, again never ending uses. Just look inside and out at the environment in this building that is unfortunately locked up asleep, just waiting for someone with vision and guts to wake it up and what better time than now to open for the new millennium and the expected tourist visitors. Other tourist needs are so close, use them rather than lose them through lack of consultation with the rest of the people of Hastings. With their ideas, and inspirations for a new Hastings for the century.

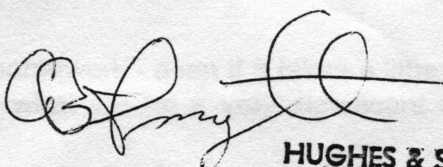
We have in place a petition through out the city noting the highlights raised in this letter for the citizens and visitors to consider and sign in support. It will be presented to the Hastings District Council/Tourist Trust in four weeks time.

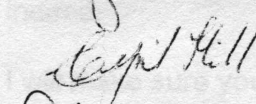
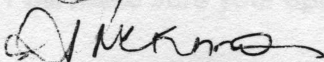
With respect, we suggest that the city caretakers, having been both elected and appointed, take note of the wishes of those that put you in the position that you now occupy, and in wisdom act on the advice and wishes of the people that also care but have a wider vision than just a few.

Yours sincerely and in anticipation for further constructive dialogue.

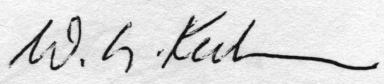
Cyril Hill
Signed on behalf of the citizens of Hastings petition.

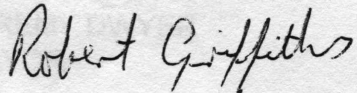
 IAN KERR

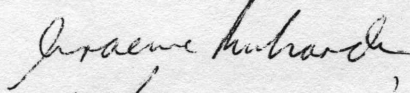

HUGHES & SMYTH PHARMACY

 ELMAN
 No 2 Shop


 DENTON WYATT BOOKSHOP

 Kershaws Furniture Court.

 GRIEVE DIAMOND JEWELLER.

 Richardson Pharmacy Ltd

 BODYLINE SHOP

 INWARD CYCLE CO. LTD.

 ALEXANDER'S.



HASTINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL

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NEW ZEALAND

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MAYOR'S OFFICE

Jeremy Dwyer QSO JP

13 September 1999

Cyril Hill
Elmar Fujji Image Plaza
Heretaunga Street
HASTINGS

Dear Cyril

Thank you for a copy of your open letter to the Council on the question of the relocation of the Visitor Information Centre.

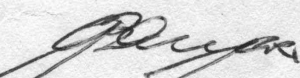
I appreciate the sentiments and philosophy behind the issue you have raised, and have my own strong personal view about the Westerman's building being one of the preferred locations - if a study shows having looked at all issues this would be desirable.

The Council has asked the Hastings Tourism Facilities Trust to manage a number of its activities - and we must give this Board the fullest of opportunities to research and report back on all of the options that they are looking at. A number of these relate to the central city area, and I know they are very mindful of the need to maximise the refurbishment investments currently going on in the CBD.

However, I believe they should be allowed to do their homework - even if it takes a little longer - and to report back to Council and not be rushed by what will be a very significant decision indeed.

I will make sure your open letter is circulated to all Councillors.

Yours sincerely


JEREMY DWYER
MAYOR