

# Aim to keep, restore former HQ

PLANS for the former Te Urewera National Park visitor centre at Aniwanuiwa are still under discussion with the Waikaremoana community.

The building was closed by the Department of Conservation due to the high cost of repair caused by water damage.

Designed by renowned Maori architect the late John Scott and completed in 1974 the building has a category 1 registration from Heritage New Zealand, formerly the Historic Places Trust, reserved for places of special or outstanding historical or cultural heritage significance or value.

John Scott's son Jacob Scott is also an architect and is based in Napier.

He said a thorough report was completed last year by the New Zealand Architects Institute with costings for maintenance and repair carried out.

He said there was water damage in four corners of the building which would cost around \$500,000 to repair.

This is in contrast to the Department of Conservation September 2012 repair bill estimate of \$1.6m including refurbishment.

Artefacts and taonga from the former Te Urewera National Park visitor centre have been in atmosphere controlled storage since August of 2012 while other



□ Two views of the former park headquarters at Aniwanuiwa — designed by architect John Scott and listed with Heritage New Zealand as a building of significance.

items are out on loan.

Heritage New Zealand remains hopeful that a group or organisation can be found to ensure the former visitor centre is restored to its original glory and reused.

The former visitor centre is on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rarangi Korero, underlying its significance.

It is further recognised and protected through its inclusion on the Wairoa District Council's heritage inventory.

Maori heritage manager for the central and southern region of Heritage New Zealand, Dean Whiting said the building had "held its own despite being closed and unoccupied for some time".

"The Department of Conservation had the foresight before vacating to strip the interior linings which has allowed the building to breathe and handle moisture levels given its forest location.

"Heritage New Zealand continues to look at any option which will allow this significant building to be used again. It is a special place."

The building's cultural and architectural significance is a strong feature of Heritage New Zealand's Listing report.

Mr Whiting said Scott's clever design allowed the meaning of the forest to be absorbed by visitors, and it conveyed the philosophy, traditions, mana and wairua of Te wao nui a Tane — the great forest of Tane — and the people of Te Urewera and Waikaremoana.



"The progression of the spaces, the views through the trees, the passageways and resting points, adds up to create an important and unique architectural work for New Zealand that intimately acknowledges the relationship of Tuhoe and Ngati Ruapani, to their ancestral land.

"This building warrants its retention and conservation. It has the potential for a range of new uses that can draw on and be inspired by this unique building and place.

"Further work is needed to achieve this and it will require the support across a range of interests. There are opportunities to look at community-based funding sources including the possibility of the Lotteries Board once support and agreement can be reached.

"Heritage New Zealand is committed to working alongside interested parties to ensure the building is enjoyed by future generations."

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