

BEFORE THE INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER An application for land use consent to
demolish the Briscoes Building at 104-106 Dee
Street Invercargill, a Category 2 Historic Place on
the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero.

BY **104 Dee Street Partnership Applicant**

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF: ANDREW BARSBY
Heritage Expert on behalf of Invercargill City Council
September 18, 2026

Introduction

1. My name is Andrew Barsby.
2. I am a Building Surveyor, a Heritage Specialist, and the Dunedin office manager of Origin Heritage.
3. I have been engaged by Invercargill City Council (ICC) to undertake an independent heritage peer review of the application for resource consent to demolish the building located at 104 -106 Dee St, Invercargill.
4. The totality of my heritage peer review consists of this summary report and two previous reports: Briscoes Peer Review Origin (23 September 2025) and Addendum Peer Review (8 August 2026).
5. The intention of this review is not to repeat the material covered in the previous reviews, but to comment on the additional information provided since those reviews, and to provide an overall summary of my findings. Where items are omitted, I either agree with what was said or have found it irrelevant for the purposes of this review.
6. This is a review of the additional material provided to me on 31 August 2026 by ICC Planner Jo Skuse which is as follows:
 1. Rhodes + Associates - Brief of Evidence, Phil Griffiths
 2. Lewis Bradford – Statement of Evidence, Robert Lane
 3. Brief of Evidence, Linda Lee
 4. Bonisch Consultants - Statement of Evidence, Christine McMillan
 5. Heritage Properties - Brief of Evidence, Susan Irvine
 6. Memo re Migration of Contaminants – 71 Spey St, Invercargill
 7. 104-01 BI Architects Concept Plan
 8. 104-02 BI Architects Concept Plan
 9. s42A report of Joanne Skuse, 23 July 2026, including Appendix A draft conditions
7. The material reviewed in my previous reports is as follows:
 - a) Resource consent application and AEE, Bonisch Consultants, 25 July 2025
 - b) Kensington Consulting structural review, October 2023
 - c) Lewis Bradford structural review memorandum and sketches, 13 January 2024
 - d) Rhodes + Associates Options Report, 6 December 2024
 - e) A Heritage Impact Assessment of the Briscoe's Building (Irvine, 2024)
 - f) Memorandum Assessing the Effects on Heritage Values – Revised Scope of Works (Irvine 2026)

- g) Dangerous and Insanitary Building Notice (November 2023)
- h) BI Architects Design Statement and concept drawings
- i) ASM NZ Ltd asbestos demolition survey, October 2023
- j) Ryall Bush Contracting draft Demolition Management Plan
- k) HNZPT submission, 8 October 2025
- l) Halligan submission, October 2025

Qualifications and experience to undertake this review

- 8. My current role with Origin Heritage is as a building surveyor and heritage specialist where I carry out condition assessments of heritage buildings and sites, making recommendations for remedial works and formulating schedules of works including maintenance plans. I also project-manage restoration and conservation projects.
- 9. I have over 20 years' experience working in stonemasonry, specialising in heritage conservation and restoration – as a stonemason, project manager and estimator. I have worked on many projects that were recognised and protected heritage buildings. I have also worked on many unreinforced masonry buildings that have suffered fire damage.
- 10. My experience as an estimator involved several years pricing major restoration and conservation projects for my employer – up to a value of AUD \$2.5 million.
- 11. Prior to joining Origin Heritage, I held the position of Heritage Advisor in the Dunedin office of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga giving advice on remedial works to built heritage and assessing resource consent applications for affected party approval.

Code of conduct

- 12. I am familiar with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have read and agree to comply with that code.
- 13. I have no conflict of interest, and my opinions fall within my area of expertise and experience. Where I have relied on information from others I have acknowledged the source.
- 14. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

Executive Summary

15. My opinion has not changed in regard to the application to demolish the former Briscoe's building being contrary to the objectives and policies concerning heritage in the Invercargill City District Plan, RMA and the Southland Regional Plan. My comments regarding this are to be found in my two previous peer review reports and are not repeated here. Retaining the facades aligns with the City District Plan objectives and policies.
16. My concluding remarks in the previous review, Addendum Peer Review (8 August 2026), stated that, in my opinion, investigation into alternative options to demolition had not been fully or adequately explored. I maintained that the option to temporarily prop the facades against strong wind in order to remove the Dangerous and Unsanitary classification (and hence remove the container, fencing and hoarding) had not been fully investigated.
17. It is my view that a more minimal and lightweight approach to propping the facades has the potential to cost a lot less than the previous options put forward and could potentially be seen as a reasonable cost for the owner to incur.
18. With cost being the primary factor and justification in the applicant's decision to demolish the building, I maintain that the level of professional advice and examination of cost should be commensurate to the major adverse effect that demolition would bring.
19. The Statement of Evidence by structural engineer Robert Lane of Lewis Bradford included an alternative propping methodology to what had previously proposed and gave an outline of the steps required to implement the methodology. Drawings were produced showing two further options that hadn't been explored. Photographs of similar examples were also included. I believe the work produced by Robert Lane, whilst being an outline methodology, represents a good examination of two further alternative options. These are:
 20. Option 6 (A) – Both facades retained, minimally propped to secure against wind; demolish fire-damaged eastern interior; allow for weather protection to exposed east end and dividing wall to close off west end.
 21. Option 7(B) – Retain Dee St façade only, minimally propped to secure against wind; demolish entire building footprint behind retained façade.
22. The Brief of Evidence by quantity surveyor Phil Griffiths of Rhodes + Associates is heavily weighted towards the assessment of cost inflation of the previous five options, rather than an assessment of the cost of the two new options outlined by structural engineer Robert Lane. It includes various tables showing all options with the cost inflation figures. However, no detail of the calculations is provided for the new options. The focus of the report is on

the options already explored and not the new alternatives. Less evidence of estimating methodology and calculations is provided for the new options than for the previous options.

23. Given that demolition and total loss of heritage value is the logical outcome once all alternatives have been fully explored, and given the brevity of costing detail provided, I believe it reasonable to question whether a thorough and adequate examination of the alternative options has taken place. I believe a more detailed breakdown of the costs and rates provided for the temporary propping scheme is appropriate and necessary.

24. I suggest that if cost is agreed to be the fundamental consideration in deciding whether demolition should be allowed, Council must be satisfied that it has received realistic cost estimates for both eventualities, i.e. retention and demolition, in order to make an informed judgement.

25. In the latter stages of this report, I discuss the difficulties and additional cost of ensuring a good quality design outcome for a new building in a heritage area – which can be avoided by the retention of the heritage facades.

Review of the additional material

Heritage Properties - Brief of Evidence, Susan Irvine

26. Susan Irvine is of the view that, having reviewed the additional material provided by the structural engineer and quantity surveyor, a thorough examination of alternative options has now occurred.

27. Susan states that she does not support demolition from a heritage perspective and acknowledges that it is Council's decision.

28. Susan states that at the time of writing her Heritage Impact Assessment (Memorandum Assessing the Effects on Heritage Values – Revised Scope of Works (Irvine 2026)) her client had decided not to pursue any of the proposed options to either retain the facades or to build an entirely new building on the site (91). Rather than being a tool to inform decision making for her client, the HIA was used to focus on the post demolition mitigation considerations, which Susan states “this reflects the scope requested by the client.” On this point I agree with Jo Skuse's comments in the Section 42A report where she states that the HIA “largely assumes that demolition is the starting point, focusing on post-demolition mitigation rather than a comprehensive assessment of alternatives”.

29. Further to 28 above, the purpose and function of an HIA is not to be a passive review of a decision that will cause an impact on heritage values, it is meant to be an iterative tool where the heritage consultant actively investigates alternative options to find the balance between the applicant's needs and heritage conservation. I believe the scope of the HIA was unnecessarily narrow and didn't look into options beyond what the owner had already received. However, I acknowledge that its author is now satisfied that alternative options have been investigated.
30. Susan Irvine states that she is in general agreement with the Section 42A report by ICC planner Jo Skuse.
31. Regarding the Volunteered Conditions put forward by the applicant, Susan supports Condition VC1 relating to the design parameters of a new replacement building. I disagree with this condition – see discussion later in the report under the evidence of Christine McMillan.
32. Regarding the BI Architect's concept design, Susan strongly opposes its inclusion as the Approved Concept Design in a condition of consent. I entirely agree with Susan.
33. Susan agrees with the remaining volunteered conditions VC3 – VC7, which includes a covenant. See discussion later in the report under the evidence of Christine McMillan.

Lewis Bradford – Statement of Evidence, Robert Lane

34. I believe the work produced by Robert Lane, whilst being an outline methodology, represents a good examination of alternative options.
35. I believe a little more detail surrounding the external temporary propping and weather protection would have been useful for pricing purposes.
36. Robert Lane raises some concern that, although the alternative lightweight propping may be sufficient to make the facades safe in terms of the Dangerous and Unsanitary aspect of the Building Act, contractors engaged to carry out the work may have a different view of the perceived level of safety for their workers. In response to this, I would suggest that this concern is not unfounded, but working on any earthquake-prone structure carries a degree of risk which needs to be mitigated as far as practicable on a case-by-case basis.

37. Little evidence has been provided of a thorough analysis of the alternative options. In fact, less calculations have been provided than there were for the original 5 options. Only one single line item of cost is provided for the entire façade works - \$1,432,615 for Option 6 and \$770,410 for Option 7. In contrast, a breakdown of the cost of the façade works provided in Options 1 to 5 consisted of 9 line items. The cost of selective demolition and mold remediation Options 6 & 7 also appear to be excessively high when compared to the contractor's demolition quote which was for the removal of both facades and clearing the site.
38. Phill Griffiths states that he has calculated costs based on rates of similar projects in Christchurch, rather than pricing the work directly – as presented by Lewis Bradford. Without further information being provided it is difficult to know if these projects are comparable. I would suggest that most propping projects in Christchurch deal with far more structurally compromised facades resulting from earthquake damage, and as such require more robust propping systems. The purpose of looking at Options 6 and 7 was to provide costs for lightweight propping against wind only.
39. There are discrepancies in the figures that appear for Option 6 & 7 in the tables provided.
40. Commenting within my area of expertise and experience (developing scope of works and providing cost estimates for large restoration projects involving unreinforced masonry buildings), I am surprised at the high estimated costs of Option 6 and Option 7. For comparison,
- a) The recently completed Stage 1 works on the restoration of the Dunedin Town Hall, which I developed the scope of works for the masonry, cost less than amount suggested for Option 6. This restoration project involved a team of stonemasons carrying out stone replacement and repair, strengthening work and cleaning for the 12-month duration, as well as lead workers carrying out extensive detailed leadwork including for the duration; slate replacement; redesigning and replacing copper rainwater goods; carpentry and joinery restoration; painting; access costs including a very large scaffold (10 levels in height) with goods hoist etc. The square metre area of the facades is more than double that of the Briscoes Building.
 - b) The strengthening work currently taking place on the iconic Dunedin Cargill's Castle, a job which I am the project manager, is costing approximately 25% of the suggested façade works of option 6. This is a larger and higher unreinforced masonry building than Briscoes and has significant cracking, movement and structural damage. Similarly,

it has also lost the timber roof structures and floors that had provided support. The works, whilst differing in methodology, are comparable as they result in stabilised facades that are safe for the future stages of conservation work to be carried out.

41. The majority of the report is focused on the cost fluctuation adjustments of the previous options rather than costing the two new options.
42. In the QS's review of the previous options 1 -5, he states that Option 4 "provides guidance on stabilisation costs against wind loads only and does not include earthquake strengthening". I find this misleading as it wasn't the previous description of this option – i.e. I suggested the notion of minimal propping against wind loads – as an alternative option worth investigating. The previous wording for option 4: Façade retention- \$1,061,220 – 'Framing (strengthening of façade - \$241,440) & "Allowance to make steel semi-permanent & internal – PS of \$50K"
43. The QS's description of Option 6 does not convey that this option is for lightweight, temp propping against wind only. Instead, it states "It includes temporary façade securing, propping and weatherproofing..."
44. Although for Option 7 he states, "It provides guidance on stabilisation costs against wind loads only and does not include earthquake strengthening." This description is missing from Option 6.

BI Architects Concept Plan

45. See comments below

Bonisch Consultants – Brief of Evidence, Christine McMillan

46. Invercargill City Centre District Plan heritage rule HH- R10 5. States 'Consideration of any relevant Invercargill heritage design guidelines' is a matter to be addressed. The evidence of Christine McMillan does not refer to or consider the Invercargill City Centre Heritage Guidelines. I believe this is a significant omission in her evidence.
47. Two concept images of a replacement building, referred to as the 'Approved Concept Design', and a set of design guideline parameters are the basis of '28A Design envelope for the Replacement Building' and are recommended as conditions of the resource consent – stating 'Any replacement building must be designed and constructed in general accordance with the Approved Concept Design or must, as a minimum, achieve each of the design parameters'.

48. In 28B it is suggested that a building consent cannot be issued until the design has been approved by a suitably qualified heritage architect, and that person certifies that the design achieves each of the design parameters set out in 28A.

49. A land covenant is proposed, tying the current and future title holders to the proposed conditions 28A, 28B and 28D, being the design parameters; certification by a suitably qualified heritage architect and provision for interpretation and salvage of materials respectively.

50. I do not support the design parameters proposed in condition 28A.

Firstly, the Invercargill City Centre Heritage Guidelines are the relevant guidelines to be considered in accordance with HH-R10(5).

Secondly, several of the proposed parameters are already addressed by existing District Plan provisions, including those relating to building height, awnings, predominantly glazed ground-floor frontages, and setbacks.

Thirdly, certain parameters are unduly restrictive, particularly those concerning window openings, parapet treatment, and an architecturally expressed corner treatment.

Fourthly, what if the suitably qualified heritage architect does agree with the parameters? The proposed parameters may also have the unintended effect of deterring prospective purchasers.

51. I do not support the adoption of an approved concept design.

Firstly, arguably you could say that the contemporary architectural expression does not sufficiently respond to the scale, rhythm, proportions, materials and character of the surrounding heritage streetscape as intended in the Invercargill City Centre Heritage Guidelines.

Secondly, as with the proposed design parameters, the concept design may deter prospective purchasers whose redevelopment intentions differ materially from the concept presented.

Thirdly, it is unclear how the concept design can properly be characterised as “approved”, given that it does not align with the relevant design guidelines and has not been endorsed by a suitably qualified heritage architect or through any other identified approval process. It is important to note that Susan Irvine, the applicant’s Heritage Consultant, also does not support the concept design.

52. . For the reasons set out above, I oppose the suggestion of a covenant which ties conditions 28A, 28B and 28D to the title.

53. I support, in principle, a requirement for design certification before a building consent is issued; however, I acknowledge that its implementation may present practical difficulties. For example, a clear process would be required to determine who qualifies as a suitably qualified heritage architect. In New Zealand there is no clear definition or qualification for a Heritage Architect. For example, must they have a formal qualification in conservation? Must they also be a member of ICOMOS? A panel may provide a more robust and balanced assessment than reliance on a single individual. I am aware that Design Review Committees exist in some parts of the world whose purpose is to review concept designs for new development in sensitive areas such as Heritage Precincts. Potentially a design review committee could be linked to a covenant.

Memo re Migration of Contaminants – 71 Spey St, Invercargill

54. The risk appears to be low. I have no comment from a heritage perspective.

Brief of Evidence, Linda Lee

55. The evidence by the owner and applicant provides a useful timeline and further background into the events that occurred.

56. In her evidence Linda states that she has exhausted all avenues to retain the facades, including trying to sell the property, and that she is not in a financial position to rebuild, strengthen, or temporarily prop the facades in light of the estimated costs that she has received.

HNZPT submission, 8 October 2025 & follow up email dated 3 June 2026

57. It is not clear to me exactly what HNZPT's position now is. In the October 2025 submission HNZPT make it clear that the proposal to demolish is against the heritage provisions of the district plan and the RMA, and that they favour the retention and stabilisation of the facades.

58. HNZPT's subsequent email to ICC dated 3 June 2026 states that, following the receipt of new information, although it is not the preferred outcome, demolition may now be the last resort. This is a surprising turn-around from the strong views stated in the submission.

59. In the email dated 3 June 2026 HNZPT encourages the Council to impose the recommended conditions of the HIA to address the relief sought in their submission – the relief sought being:

- a) The retention of the façades of the Briscoes Building (Former), including any stabilisation works required for the façades using best practice heritage conservation,
- b) An assessment of the proposed works is to be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced consultant archaeologist prior to the commencement of any works. The archaeological assessment will cover the history of occupation within the development area, the scope of the development, and the likelihood of modifying, damaging, or destroying any archaeological sites. The archaeological assessment will determine whether an archaeological authority is required for the proposed works.

Although HNZPT have stated that they no longer want to appear at the hearing, it appears that the relief sought in their submission still stands.

Further consideration regarding the design of a replacement building vs the retention of the heritage facades

60. Even with design guidelines in place, a local example in Dunedin demonstrates that achieving a good outcome for a replacement building in a heritage context can be problematic and challenging. The example of the new ACC building in Dowling St (see images in the appendix) whilst widely accepted as a very successful outcome, was not seamless process. Interestingly, it can be argued that the bold design features do not fit that well with some of the DCC Heritage Precinct Design Guidelines, which reference preferred outcomes such as consistency with the style of Victorian and Edwardian buildings, drawing design cues, window alignments etc. Regarding materials, the ACC building diverges from the suggested examples which are listed as 'plaster, brick, stone or concrete', and instead achieves an impressive aesthetic outcome using predominately glass and metal cladding (although there is a bluestone-clad base to the building). On the other hand, the DCC guidelines for the precinct says that new buildings 'should use creative design to enhance the urban feel of the area and reflect the core values without attempting to dominate the existing heritage architecture'. It does achieve this in my view.

61. To conclude, with guidelines alone there is no guarantee of a quality outcome. A talented design team backed and supported by a robust design process is what is required. In my opinion the process should be lead by a design review committee rather than a single individual. This committee would cover heritage, architecture, urban design, and planning at a minimum.

62. A quality outcome arises through quality design, but this comes with added cost – the cost of the design, materials and labour, and also the cost of the process.

63. A question worth considering is whether it is a good idea or even fair to pass on the additional cost of a quality design to the prospective buyer when they miss out on the opportunity to enhance what is already there and already valued and is a certain outcome. Heritage value and cost are the core considerations for the council. Can guidelines and a robust design process be conditioned to ensure that a new building is delivered that enhances the feel and streetscape value of the area, that essentially offsets the loss of heritage value? Or does the retention of the existing heritage value represent a more certain outcome that justifies the cost?

Appendix 1. The ACC building in the Moray Place – Dowling Street Heritage Precinct, Dunedin:



Appendix 2. The Dunedin Town Hall Restoration, Stage 1 – cost comparison



Appendix 3. Cargill's Castle, Dunedin – cost comparison

