

Hospital gates gain protection

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The old Barrett St hospital gates have been recognised as being historically valuable to the city.

The decision by the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) to classify the Dawson St gates and the brick wall as a Category A Heritage Item was released yesterday, following an extraordinary meeting last Thursday. The public was excluded from attending the closed door session.

In order to classify the gates and brick wall as Category A, a change was required to the district plan. New Plymouth woman Carla MacKinnon, who campaigned to keep the gates, was "ecstatic" with the news.

"I'm really happy," she said.

MacKinnon, who lived in the former doctor's residence located within the complex, said it was important the city preserved as much of its history as it could.

She said while most of the buildings from the old hospital site would be lost, another small part of its history would be retained.

In 1996, the 7.62 hectare site was sold to the Government for \$1 million and was currently land banked with the Office of Treaty Settlements.

The first stage of the demolition process began last month when contractors moved onto the site to remove asbestos from the hospital's heating pipes. It was expected to take three months and once complete, all of the buildings, except for the Category A heritage listed former nurses' home, would be demolished.

Once the site was cleared, Te Atiawa would have first right of refusal to purchase the property. NPDC district planning lead Juliet



Carla MacKinnon is happy the council have classified the old Barrett St hospital gates and a Category A Heritage Item.

Johnson said the decision was a well balanced one.

"Overall, the council's decision allows the heritage values of the gates and brick wall to be preserved while still accommodating options for any future development on the site," she said.

Heritage value was determined by a variety of factors, including the history of the site, its importance to the community, its uniqueness and its setting.

The gates and brick wall would be subject to rules set out in the district plan around alterations, removal and subdivision which meant anyone wanting to undertake work at the site that was not keeping with the heritage values would have to apply for resource consent.

MacKinnon hoped once the other work had been finished some attention might be turned to the gates and wall itself.

"They do need a bit of work," she said.

She said ensuring the gates and wall were safe and well maintained would be a good start.

The outcome was still subject to appeal to the Environment Court. Any appeals needed to be lodged within 30 days of the decision.