



UNCERTAIN FUTURE: This 19th century worker's cottage is at the centre of debate over its future.

Photo: DWAYNE SENIOR

Historic NP cottage in the way of future development, says club

By VICTORIA BATCHELOR

THE FUTURE of New Plymouth's last remaining historic worker's cottage hangs in limbo.

The cottage, at 2-4 Young St, which has a category II listing with the Historic Places Trust, is owned by Club Taranaki, which wants it removed to make way for car parks.

The president of Club Taranaki (formerly the Combined Taranaki Club), Graham Harris, said the 19th century cottage was "not usable by our club as such and just something more to maintain".

Since the club formed two years ago from an amalgamation of the Taranaki Club and Commercial Travellers' Club, it had had a vast increase in patronage and, consequently, it needed more car parks.

"It (the cottage) stands in the way of future development of the club."

The club had called for tenders,

which closed last month, to buy and remove the cottage.

Taranaki Museum director Ron Lambert describes the cottage, dating from at least the 1850s, as one of New Plymouth's major historic buildings.

"Its age gives it national significance. I am opposed to it being moved and I would hope some alternative solution can be found to that course of action," Mr Lambert said.

"It is not one of the important and gracious homes that are often preserved because of their size and grandeur, rather an example of one of the lower socio-economic houses that all too often fall to the demolisher's hammer.

"It's the only remaining example of labourers' cottages erected on what was called Devonport."

NPDC assistant planner Jenny Heyes said the council was reluctant to see any historic building moved.

The cottage had been registered under the New Plymouth District Plan,

and anyone wanting to move it would have to apply for resource consent, she said.

The resource consent process involves public consultation and allows interested parties to have their say. Ms Heyes said that during the process, inquiries would be made whether there were other viable options.

Ms Heyes said the council would take action if the club tried to move the cottage. "There are enforcement procedures under the Resource Management Act that the council can consider.

"We are waiting for something to happen. We hope they come to see us before they do anything else.

"They have suggested they have a contrary legal opinion, but they haven't shown us that yet."

Mr Harris declined to say whether the club had legal opinion that it did not need the council's consent. "I am organising a meeting with the council in the next week or so."