

**3 SEPTEMBER 2019**

## **PETONE SETTLERS MUSEUM – EARTHQUAKE PRONE BUILDING NOTICE FAQs**

### **Q. What is an earthquake prone building (EPB) notice?**

EPB notices inform building users and the public about a building's (or part of a building's) potential seismic performance in a moderate earthquake compared to a new building on the same site. The notices, amongst other things, identify the building or part of a building that is earthquake prone, give the earthquake rating, and state the deadline for completing seismic work. Councils also put this information on the national EPB.

### **Q. Why has an earthquake prone notice been issued?**

The Petone Settlers Museum received an initial seismic assessment from WPS Opus as part of an on-going process of checking buildings around the city. This initial assessment has estimated the building is rated at 20% of the New Building Standard or NBS, and it was recommended that a more detailed seismic assessment needs to be carried out.

Any building that receives an initial rating of less than 34% is issued with an earthquake prone notice which is to be displayed at the entrance of the building.

The earthquake-prone building notice requires that the building is strengthened within 15 years as per the Building Act. This is the maximum time available and council will consider undertaking any remedial work in a shorter timeframe particularly given its heritage status. Once the final engineering report on the building is received council will consider this and assess what needs to be undertaken to bring the building up to an acceptable level of seismic risk.

### **Q. What issues were identified in the initial report?**

The ISA does not identify critical structural issues. The major concern identified in the initial report was the ground under the building, which is located on Petone's foreshore. The ground is comprised of soft soil, which has potential for liquefaction and settlement. The building's reinforced concrete walls are 80 years old, and were also highlighted as an area needed further investigation.

### **Q. Will the Petone Settlers Museum be closed?**

We are waiting on the detailed seismic assessment report before deciding the best course of action. The initial report identified that the risk of remaining open is not considered significant, but we're working with our staff to ensure visitors are aware of the earthquake prone status.

### **Q. What are the legal requirements for closing an earthquake prone building?**

The only legal obligation under the Building Act is to strengthen existing buildings to above 34% NBS. As such, there is no requirement to close a building on the basis of the initial desk-top report that has been received.

Petone Settlers Museum can continue to operate while we wait for the detailed seismic assessment to be carried out.

**Q. How is this different to the decision you made about closing Naenae Pool?**

Naenae Pool was closed once engineers had completed further investigative reports on the pool which followed initial seismic assessments. We are currently awaiting a more detailed report on Petone Settlers Museum before making any decisions about this building.

**Q. When was the Petone Settlers Museum built?**

The building was opened in 1940 to commemorate the arrival of the first New Zealand Company immigrants to Wellington in 1840, and originally served as a bathing pavilion for Petone's beach scene. In 1977, the building was converted into the Petone Settlers Museum.

The building is classified as a Category 1 historic building by Heritage New Zealand and is protected via a listing in the City of Lower Hutt District Plan.

**Q. What actions have been made to care and maintain the building in recent years?**

In early 2016, the Petone Settlers Museum underwent an exterior refurbishment, costing \$250,000, which included replacing the roof, plaster repairs and repainting. The exhibition spaces were also redeveloped at a cost of \$75,000

Additional works:

- 2005 – alteration and repairs to the value of \$35,000
- 1988 – upgrade/alteration
- 1977 – major repair and refurbishment to convert building from public baths to Petone Settlers Museum. Expanded in 1979 to occupy whole building.
- 1940 – opened as public baths

**Q. Will visitors and staff be at risk through the museum remaining open?**

We have assessed the risk including taking into consideration the engineers report.

In the event of an earthquake, the building will be evacuated and if necessary, staff will guide visitors to higher ground.

**Q. Why was the assessment carried out?**

The Hutt City Council, like many councils around the country, is undertaking engineering assessments of their buildings, to understand what the issues are and to take action to safeguard the public and our staff. The assessment of the Petone Settlers Museum was part of this process.

**Q. What about other council buildings?**

Building standards in New Zealand are continually being updated. As a council it is our role to ensure that we are applying these new standards to our buildings so that they are assessed as being safe to occupy. We routinely commission building assessments and engineering reports on our buildings. When undertaking this work we generally incorporate any work identified as part of our annual general programme of maintenance. In addition,

over the last few years, we have undertaken a major refresh of council assets including two new community hubs, council administration building, and other facilities.

**Q. I have collection items on display/in storage at PSM – what happens to them?**

We're in the process of contacting everyone with items on display or in storage. Please contact [settlers@huttcity.govt.nz](mailto:settlers@huttcity.govt.nz) if you have any concerns.

**Q. Where can I find out more information?**

We will also be providing further information via Hutt City Council's websites and Facebook as it becomes available.