

2 December 2024

s 9(2)(a)

I write in response to your request dated 4 November 2024, for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) relating to the Dixon Street apartment complex. Specifically, you requested the following:

1. the property book value
2. what price was paid for its purchase
3. any reports undertaken in regards to the building condition

**The following summary provides background information about the Dixon Street apartment building, which we believe will be of use to you.**

Kāinga Ora has been looking at options for the future of 134 Dixon Street since 2021. The 11-storey, 117 unit building in Wellington's CBD was designed by the Housing Construction Department of the Ministry of Works under government architect Gordon Wilson in 1940. It is listed as a Category 1 Historic Place on the New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero maintained by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT), reflecting its historic significance. The building has also been scheduled as a heritage building in the Wellington City District Plan since 1994.

A Detailed Seismic Assessment was completed in October 2020 which determined the building has a strength of 40% New Building Standard (NBS). This is above the legal threshold for being considered "earthquake prone" (less than 34% NBS) but remains an earthquake risk. Kāinga Ora's policy seeks, where practical, to achieve 67% NBS. This is to reduce the risk to occupants and assets from earthquakes.

Kāinga Ora has been looking at options for the future of this building since 2021, as many components of the building (including the building services and roof) are reaching the end of their useful life and require replacement. Additionally, the units do not meet current standards of living, including Healthy Homes standards and acoustic performance.

All the customers who were living in the Dixon Street flat have now been moved into other Kāinga Ora homes and the building is being secured while decisions are made on its future.

Broadly speaking, the main options under consideration are to remediate the building in its current typology to meet current standards, either with or without structural strengthening, or seeking to divest the building.

The property is subject to a Right of First Refusal, with Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (PNBST) the mandated iwi authority that manages the Treaty Settlement on behalf of their broader beneficiaries of Taranaki Whānui.

## Responses to your questions

Kāinga Ora is still considering its options for the site, one of which being divestment. Therefore, with respect to question one, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(j) of the Act, to enable Kāinga Ora: “to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations.” I have considered the public interest pursuant to section 9(1) of the Act. I do not consider the withholding of the information from this response is outweighed by public interest considerations in making that information available.

As noted above, the site was not purchased but was instead built by the then Labour Government as part of its first state housing programme. Therefore, we are refusing this question under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information you have requested is not held by Kāinga Ora and I have no grounds to believe that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. However, Heritage New Zealand notes at the time the complex was built, the cost per single unit was £1,619. For more information, you can refer to the Heritage website at:

<https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/7395/Dixon%20Street%20Flats>

In relation to question three, I am declining this under section 18(f) of the Act, ‘the information cannot be made available without substantial collation and research’.

Our preliminary scoping of this part of your request indicated a large volume of documents. We considered attempting to identify and provide key documents in scope of your request, in line with our proposed refinement sent to you on 12 November 2024, however this has proved impractical given the volume of information potentially in scope. As required by section 18(A) of the OIA, consideration was given to fixing a charge and further extending the timeframe, but we have determined that neither option would assist in making the information available to you.

In the event that the organisation does proceed with a sale on the open market, we will provide potential purchasers with information about the building, including all information required by law.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. There is information about how to make a complaint at <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz> or by freephone on [0800 802 602](tel:0800802602).

Nāku iti noa, nā



Daniel Soughtton  
**Deputy Chief Executive – Central**