

BEFORE THE PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF an application by the Anglican Diocese of Wellington for the refurbishment, strengthening and extension to the heritage-listed building known as All Saints Church, 338 Church Street, Palmerston North

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DAVID MOXON

Introduction

- [1] My name is David Moxon KNZM, CStJ MA (Hons), DLitt (Honoris causa) Massey, MA Oxford, Cert Mst, Dr (Hon) Waikato, Lth Aotearoa.
- [2] I was baptised in All Saints Church at Palmerston North on 28 October in 1951. My parents were married there the year before, and there have been several other family liturgies there over the years, including baptisms, marriages and funerals. All Saints is the spiritual home of my boyhood.
- [3] I went to Hokowhitu School, College St Intermediate, School and Freyberg High School in Palmerston.
- [4] After serving with Volunteer Service Abroad in Fiji in 1970, I studied at Massey, Canterbury and Oxford universities.
- [5] I was ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 1979, served in Havelock North and Tauranga, then becoming a national theological educator.
- [6] I was made Bishop of Waikato in 1993, and Archbishop of the New Zealand Dioceses in 2008.
- [7] In 2013, I was appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to the Holy See in Rome.
- [8] I returned to New Zealand in 2017 where I currently serve as an Archbishop Emeritus, including the role of Priory Dean for New Zealand of the Order of St John, a board member of two schools and a university College, and Patron of the Faith Community Nurses network for New Zealand. I also serve as co-chair of the advisory group to the Walking Together Foundation internationally, an ecumenical aid and development agency.
- [9] I was knighted in 2015 and made a commander of the Order of St John in 2020.

The decision to build the font area the way it is

- [10] When All Saints church was built, the architect and church authorities were seeking to present a baptismal font where early practice and ancient tradition would usually have placed it when the first separate large church building was created; near the entrance. The rationale for this has always been that someone entering a church is reminded of the fact that the spiritual 'entry' into the Body of Christ is by baptism. Arrival, welcome and hospitality always related to a sense of the life-giving waters of new birth, which is what baptism denotes. There is usually a sense of space and a clear view of all the congregation.
- [11] However, for whatever reason a decision was taken at All Saints to place the font near the entrance, but not where ancient Christian tradition would have typically have positioned it. The major cathedrals of England, of which Durham is a fine example, placed the font directly after the point of entry, but without a separate room framed by arches. The decision to build a separate baptistry room, out of view of either entrance and semi cut off from the congregation is unusual, and probably reflects an architectural fancy more than good liturgical and Christian practice.

Everyone is welcome anytime of the day

- [12] The ancient and early tradition also provided for a large central door as the entrance, providing a clear view of the interior. That not only served a practical purpose but also emphasized that large numbers of people would be welcome, could fit in, and their arrival moved them directly into the main aisle of the church leading up to the altar. That made for great and very practical celebrations of weddings, funerals and large services of all kinds, as well as smaller ones. The decision to place two small doors on either side of the incongruous semi-enclosed baptistry, therefore, worked against these fundamental principles of the Christian tradition. For this reason, baptisms were no longer conducted in the current baptistry when the church was in use before closure. That defeats the point of the baptismal liturgy and its place in any church.

The form should follow function

- [13] The measure of any church architectural feature follows the basic principle of form follows function. Does the form allow the building to do what it was built to do? If a piece of architecture is not suitable for its original intended purpose and does not reflect its most original heritage, then it becomes a museum piece. All Saints wasn't built to become a museum. It was built to be a sacred hospitable and meaningful space for the citizens of Palmerston North City. I argue that the current porch frontage proposal returns the building to its original best intention, and provides a more accurate expression of the earliest traditions of the church. The proposed change is the best expressional the generic character of the building.
- [14] It might be counter-argued that the proposal is destroying an architectural treasure or special feature. In fact, the proposal will highlight the best feature of the current baptistry, which is the magnificent marble font in the middle of it. By placing this great work of art in the centre of the main aisle near a new central entrance which is wide open to the street, this treasure will be encountered and used by thousands. That has not been the case for a long time. It is customary in many places all over the Christian world to place water in an open font near the entrance for people to sign themselves with the cross using the water as they pass, as a reminder of their baptism. That has not been possible at All Saints for many years.

Preserving heritage for the future with public use

- [15] The proposal also emphasizes in several documents that the many other treasures and features of this heritage building will be kept as they are but highlighted for much more public use. The intention to fit halogen spotlights playing on the arches of the great wooden roof, onto special kauri carvings and the great marble altar will make the church much more beautiful and visitable. A new open, welcoming entrance from the front, leading directly off the street into a discretely lit sacred space will become a go-to place for many who simply want to sit and soak up the quiet and the beauty. The proximity of the busy central business district and civic hub

make this church a comfortable place to enjoy in these ways. The proposal opens up all of these possibilities. Mothballing the baptistry doesn't.

- [16] Also, crucial to the proposal, is the provision of a drop-in coffee space beside the main door of welcome for those who want to stop off the street on the corner of the Square and chat. Or just sit down, if they wish, while still close to the life of the Square. That is a feature of many churches in Europe and elsewhere. The relationship with the street and pedestrian traffic is well integrated into churches like All Saints in thousands of ways all over the Christian world. It always had been since the beginning of the Christian community 2,000 years ago. Declining the proposal removes this hospitable and community-facing service from the Square and the City.

Anglican architectural guidelines from the beginning to today

- [17] Other evidence for the Applicant has noted a resource for church design and refurbishment for the Anglican Communion called "Re pitching the tent" by The Revd Dr Richard Giles, who has been a vicar of traditional church buildings and Dean of Philadelphia Cathedral. In that text, Dr Giles has summarised the way the church ought to use heritage buildings today. He argues from the earliest practice of the faith. The first church ever recognized for Christian use was Peters house in Capernaum in Israel, Palestine. It was enlarged when people began to use it and appreciate it as gathering space for sacred use. The extension involved a hospitable front courtyard facing the street. The proposal by the Parish of All Saints is to do the same. That is not the erosion of an architectural treasure or disregard for New Zealand heritage; it is the reassertion by appropriate evolution of the Church form of the first principles of church architecture and of the original intention of the heritage itself. It is a fundamental matter of integrity and the freedom for a community group to express its most basic belief and practice. It is a matter of human rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping letters, positioned above a horizontal line.

Sir David Moxon