

1 December 2023

Section 9(2)(a)

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Our ref: OIA 107984

Tēnā koe Section 9(2)(a)

Official Information Act request: Old Hamilton Courthouse

Thank you for your email of 1 November 2023, to the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information regarding the Old Hamilton Courthouse. Specifically, you requested:

Any correspondence or reports made by ministry staff pertaining to the status of, or plans for, the old Hamilton courthouse, during the 2023 (to date) calendar year

I understand there has been some work done on the interior of the building, but if any details about what has been happening, and in which parts of the building it would be appreciated

If any asbestos has been removed, is it possible to quantify how much

When is the work estimated to be completed? And what is the anticipated next development concerning the courthouse?

I am also seeking the cost (to date) of security fencing erected around the courthouse. The fencing was, I understand, erected in mid-February

Your request has been referred to me for response, as it falls within my responsibilities as Deputy Secretary, Corporate & Digital Services and is being managed in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

On 8 November 2023, the Ministry contacted you to clarify one part of your requests, specifically “*Any correspondence or reports made by the ministry staff pertaining to the status of, or plans for, the Old Hamilton Courthouse, during the 2023 (to date) calendar year*”. You confirmed that your request could be clarified to the following:

...let's simply omit the word "correspondence" from my request...

Following a search of our records, I can confirm that there are no reports written by Ministry staff pertaining to the status of, or plans for, the Old Hamilton Courthouse in the 2023 year to date. However, you may be interested in a report by engineering company WSP, which was commissioned by the Ministry on how to preserve and secure the Old Courthouse. I have

attached a copy of the report. Some information has been withheld under the following provisions of the Act:

section 9(2)(a) to protect privacy of natural persons

section 6(d) to endanger the safety of any person

In response to your request concerning: *"I understand there has been some work done on the interior of the building, but if any details about what has been happening, and in which parts of the building it would be appreciated"* The Ministry is currently removing asbestos to allow safe remediation of the building's western wall.

In response to your request concerning: *"If any asbestos has been removed, is it possible to quantify how much?"* Around five percent of the asbestos in the building has now been removed.

In response to your request concerning: *"When is the work estimated to be completed? What is the anticipated next development concerning the courthouse?"* The Ministry is currently investigating what remediation works will be required to preserve the building.

This will include works to better secure the vacant building, prevent further serious deterioration, and meet any ongoing maintenance requirements. That anticipated scope may include full asbestos removal, roof repair or replacement, and targeted structural strengthening. Until we know the scope of the works we are unable to provide a timeline for completion.

In response to your request concerning: *"I am also seeking the cost (to date) of security fencing erected around the courthouse"* The total costs (to date) of the security fencing is \$53,993.03.

If you require any further information, please contact Media & Social Media Manager Joe Locke at media@justice.govt.nz.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: justice.govt.nz/about/official-information-act-requests/oia-responses/.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. The Office of the Ombudsman may be contacted by email to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phone on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Kelvin Watson
Deputy Secretary, Corporate & Digital Services