



The South Taranaki District Council no longer needs the historic building in the centre of town, known as the Oxygen building.

CATHERINE GROENESTEIN/STUFF

Sale could breathe new life into old building

Catherine Groenestein

One of Hāwera's oldest buildings may soon be offered for sale – but only to a buyer with deep pockets who can give it some serious TLC.

The 1884 Oxygen building, also known as the Bob Thomas building, stands on the corner of Regent and High streets, across the road from where the town's new library and cultural centre, Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga, will be built.

The South Taranaki District Council bought the building in 2015 as a possible site for the centre.

But now its roof leaks, the verandah is temporarily propped up, wallpaper is peeling, and the paintwork is deteriorating, a report by recreation and facilities manager Phil Waite said.

An estimated \$700,000 is needed to earthquake strengthen, retrofit and renovate it to 40 per cent of the new building standard.

This week, the council's policy and strategy committee voted to offer the building for sale – with provisions that any buyer has the means to do the necessary repairs and upgrades.

"The disposal of the building will avoid the negative impacts of a neglected and unsafe building located in the heart of the Hāwera CBD and will provide the opportunity for private development of quality retail and commercial space," the report said.

The decision will need to be confirmed by the full council at its next meeting.

■ In June, the council decided to sell the former Eltham Borough Council headquarters, built in 1911, which needs an estimated \$1.8 million for earthquake strengthening and extensive repairs.