

# Legal win for cathedral plans



## Court of Appeal

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Refurbishment of the vicarage at Taranaki Cathedral can finally get under way, after a neighbour's bid to have the project's resource consent overturned failed.

Last year, Wayne O'Keeffe argued in the High Court at New Plymouth that the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) decision to grant the Taranaki Cathedral Church of St Mary redevelopment project a resource consent on a non-notified basis was unlawful.

As well as shifting the vicarage forward and turning it into a function and research centre, the planned \$15 million redevelopment includes building Te Whare Hononga, a centre for peace and reconciliation, and earthquake

strengthening the cathedral.

The vicarage was built in 1899 and last July it was moved about 20 metres closer to Vivian St on the back of two low-loaders.

O'Keeffe, who lives opposite the cathedral, wanted the resource consent for the project overturned.

He argued the resource consent application should have been notified, so that he and others could make submissions to the council. He also said the relocated vicarage would be over district plan height restrictions and would lead to increased traffic and parking problems.

But following the judicial review in the High Court at the end of last year, a judge disagreed, saying the council had followed the correct procedures.

O'Keeffe appealed and the hearing was held at the Court of Appeal in Wellington on February 11.



Moving the old vicarage and transforming it into a function and research centre is the first part of the three-stage Taranaki Cathedral redevelopment.

SIMON O'CONNOR/STUFF

However, the court found none of the arguments put forward by O'Keeffe had been proven. Therefore it has now ruled that the

appeal must be dismissed.

The NPDC did not ask for costs but O'Keeffe will have to pay costs to the Taranaki Anglican

Trust Board.

O'Keeffe said he was disappointed but the hearing had thrown up a few issues, so he was considering his options.

A Taranaki Cathedral spokesperson said the result of the appeal being dismissed was that the resource consent stood.

"We are relieved and happy that we can get on with the work.

"We are aiming to have a building contractor on site by late July to start building Te Whare Hononga and refurbishing the vicarage. Watch this space."

Shifting the vicarage forward and renovating it is the first part of a three-stage project.

Once renovated, the vicarage will have a function centre downstairs and the Sir Paul Reeves education centre upstairs.

The second stage includes the building of Te Whare Hononga and the third stage is the earthquake strengthening work.