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# Flight House future fuels fears

Neighbours to the site proposed for New Plymouth's historic Flight House don't want the building moved into their area.

They say it will suffer damage from salt air and vandals and will block coastal views.

A neighbourhood meeting was firmly against the idea, said Dawson Street resident Edna Karalus.

Since it was held, several people have written to the Taranaki Herald expressing opposition to the shift.

They suggest other sites for the house such as Marsland Hill, Brooklands Park, central city or a Pioneer Village.

The house for New Plymouth's first Justice of the Peace Josiah Flight was built in 1868 of vertical board and batten construction with a solid kauri floor. It has recently been restored by Taranaki Polytechnic which now wants it removed from its site.

Govett-Brewster Art Gallery director Cheryl Sotheran has proposed it become a residence for selected artists of national and international standing who would exhibit at the gallery work completed during their residency.

Some of the letters appear to have been written by the same person, but carry different signatures.

Hine Street resident Evelyn McEldowney said she did not write the letter which carries her name, but added her signature to one written by someone else.

However, she confirms she does not favour the proposal.

Mrs McEldowney said Hine

Street is not the right place for Flight House, but she does not know of a more suitable position.

"I'm not interested in it really except that I don't want it here," she said.

Mrs Karalus said vandalism is rife in the area. Her car was, recently stolen from the street and a nearby monument has often been vandalised.

She also says the proposed site is popular as a reserve, with many people eating lunch there in summer. She said trees

By JUDITH HILL

would have to be removed to make way for the house, and it would be near a bank.

Mrs Karalus said she wrote to the Herald because the council had not called for objections to the plan and she felt this was the only way to be heard.

"That's what John Honnor told us to do."

City councillor John Honnor strongly opposes the moving of Flight House to Hine Street and voted against it at the council's cultural committee meeting.

He said one of the residents approached him about the issue.

However, he said writing to the paper is not the only solution. The council will have to advertise its proposal and residents will then have the opportunity to lodge formal objections if they feel strongly.

"Do we really need to buy a fight with the local residents? There are other sites where it could be situated quite successfully where it's not going to

be exposed to the ravages of the salt air."

Mr Honnor said the council has always been vocal about maintaining its open spaces and though the Hine Street site is small it's an attractive open space which residents and others enjoy.

He also said the house will be a tight fit on the proposed site, especially once a kitchen-bathroom area and a garage have been added.

He says there are complications with other sites too, but nothing that couldn't be overcome. He would like to see Flight House sited near St Mary's Church, which would still be close to the art gallery but less exposed to the weather.

Hine Street resident Hazel Revell says she did not attend the neighbourhood meeting, but opposes the plan because of the danger of vandalism.

She also said the proposed site is very small.

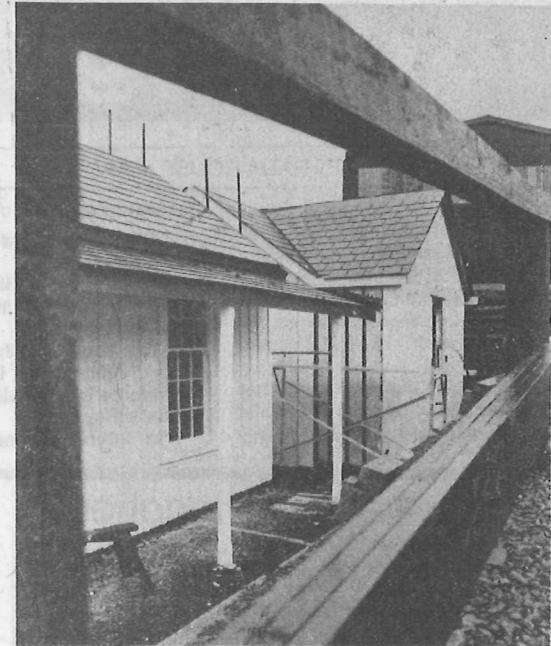
"It's a nice developed area. It's a shame to put anything on it," she said.

She suggested Flight House be sited in the area being developed in central New Plymouth.

Although the city council has approved in principle the artist in residency proposal, it will not fund the project.

It is estimated at least \$60,000 will be needed to establish the building on a new site.

Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council subsidies and other sponsorship will also be sought for costs associated with the artist and promotions.



ABOVE: At Taranaki Polytechnic, New Plymouth, Flight House underwent substantial renovations and is now ready for relocation.

BELOW: The house on its original site in Eliot Street, New Plymouth, before restoration.

