



The old Barrett St Hospital's gates and brick wall on Dawson St.

PHOTO: ANDY JACKSON/FAIRFAX NZ

Future of historic hospital gates is debated in private

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Changing New Plymouth's district plan to make sure the old Barrett St Hospital gates are safe from demolition has been debated behind closed doors.

Plan change 41, which would allow the ornate gates and brick wall, on Dawson St, to be classified as Category A Heritage Item, was the subject of an

extraordinary district council meeting last night.

The public was excluded from attending under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act as the release of the information was deemed to risk exposing the council to legal, financial or reputational repercussions.

The 7.62 hectare site was sold to the Government in 1996 for \$1 million and

has been administered by the Ministry of Justice since 2006 as part of the Office of Treaty Settlements Landbank.

Work to demolish the dilapidated hospital buildings, which were contaminated with asbestos, began earlier this year.

The former nurses' home is listed as a Category A heritage building in the council's district plan and can not be demolished.

The gates and wall were initially not protected. However after a community campaign an independent historian ruled the structures to be Category A heritage items.

In 2014 John McLeod, a councillor at the time and a bricklayer by trade, described the wall as one of a kind in the district and believed it could be restored to its former glory. If councillors vote to include the gates and wall

under the district plan they could not be moved or demolished without a resource consent from the NPDC.

Te Atiawa will have the opportunity to buy the land, an old pa site, which was valued at \$3.775 million in 2010, once the site is cleared.

A NPDC spokeswoman said if the change was adopted a public notice would go in Saturday's *Taranaki Daily News*.