

TE HENUI CHAPEL TO GO

TENDERS CALLED FOR REMOVAL

Framed by the entrance gates in Lemon Street, New Plymouth, the small spire-crowned building at the end of the main drive in Te Henui cemetery is a familiar landmark. It has been in service for probably 50 years and now tenders for its removal have been called by the New Plymouth City Council. Tentative plans are to replace it with a new building of fitting architectural beauty.

Because modern mortuary chapels were now provided by undertakers, the chapel at the cemetery was no longer used for the purpose for which it was originally built, said Mr. G. H. Fry, chairman of the works committee of the New Plymouth City Council.

"Owing to its age it has fallen into a state of disrepair and does not present a pleasing appearance facing as it does the main entrance to the cemetery," said Mr. Fry. "It is thought that the cost of putting it into repair is not warranted. It is thought advisable that it should be removed and replaced with a suitable edifice in the form of a shelter or resting place of fitting architectural beauty." Such amenities were not at present provided at the cemetery.

These were the tentative plans, said Mr. Fry. No final decision had been made on the plans for providing shelter (which would stand in the same position as the present building), or on the layout of the surrounding area with suitable gardens and lawns.

LAST USED.

The sexton of the cemetery, Mr. L. W. D. Bennoch, said that in the past 13 years the building had not been used on more than 10 occasions. The last time it had been used was to shelter children two and a-half years ago at an Anzac service. Not only were chapels now provided by funeral directors, but the building was no longer the centre of the cemetery. The area now being used was well beyond the present building.

Externally, the present building is built in conventional church style with peaked roof and windows and a latticed porch. There is a spire, too, with room for a bell, but a bell was never installed. Inside, however, it is only a bare room furnished with a number of wooden forms. The floor is slightly raised at one end.

Except for the roof the building is entirely of wood, which is reported to be of excellent quality and in good preservation. The only wood with worm in it is new material used for repairs.

If a tender for removal is finally accepted, the successful tenderer will be faced with an expensive job. Although by removing the roof it would be possible to take the building in one piece, the cemetery gates are fairly narrow. If it is to be used in its present shape, the tenderer will have either to dismantle it entirely or have it raised over the gate as it passes through.