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Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga
DUNEDIN 9058

Via EMAIL: submissionsos@heritage.org.nz

Otago Regional Council feedback on the Proposed National Historic Landmark for the Ōamaru Historic Town Centre and Port

1. Introduction

Otago Regional Council (ORC) staff welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal to give National Historic Landmark (NHL) status for the Ōamaru Historic Town Centre and Port and recognise this proposal's alignment with the outcomes set by ORC's regional policy framework to align with national direction. ORC staff consider that we can support this initiative of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

ORC staff have made this submission while considering ORC's two Regional Policy Statements, which are discussed further in sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this submission.

ORC maintains a strong and collaborative relationship with stakeholders and communities in the Waitaki District, acknowledging the district's role as the main northern gateway to Otago and its unique natural, historic and cultural heritage. This relationship is particularly relevant in relation to the Ōamaru Historic Town Centre and Port, where ORC's role in sustainably managing values associated with the coastal marine area and water resources is critical to the sustainable use and protection of the town and port areas distinctive heritage setting.

ORC acknowledges that the well-being of the region's communities, including the people of Waitaki, is inextricably linked to the health of the environment. This linkage is especially significant given the deep historical and cultural connection local people, including Kai Tahu, have with the coastal environment.

In preparing this submission to Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga regarding the proposed National Landmark status, the ORC reaffirms its commitment to environmental stewardship, infrastructure planning, and regional development. These responsibilities are directly tied to preserving and enhancing the integrity and value of Ōamaru's remarkable built and natural coastal heritage.

2. Regulatory Framework Relevance

2.1 Resource Management Act 1991

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is the principal legislation governing the sustainable management of New Zealand's natural and physical resources and provides the primary regulatory framework for heritage protection at the regional and district level.

As a regional council, ORC plays a specific and important role in implementing the RMA, particularly in managing the wider environment, including the coastal environment which is a key aspect of the proposal given the inclusion of the Oamaru Port infrastructure.

Section 6(f) of the RMA, Matters of National Importance, requires the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

The proposed designation of Ōamaru's historic town centre and port as National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) will strengthen both regional and district planning frameworks, ensuring they give effect to this section 6 matter.

Closer alignment between local and national planning frameworks is essential as the Ōamaru Town Centre represents the only known example in New Zealand of intact Victorian limestone industrial buildings¹.

2.2 Regional Policy Statements

Under the RMA, the ORC is required to produce a Regional Policy Statement (RPS), which sets out a high-level policy framework for the sustainable integrated management of resources. An RPS identifies regionally significant issues, establishes objectives and policies to guide how natural and physical resources are to be managed and sets out how these will be implemented by the region's local authorities.

At the time of this submission, the ORC has two regional policy statements:

- the operative *Regional Policy Statement 2019* (ORPS19), which was made operative on 4 March 2024; and
- the Proposed Regional Policy Statement for Otago 2021 (pORPS21), which has now passed through the appeal process but is yet to be made operative by ORC.

The sections below outline, by topic, the ORPS19 and pORPS21 provisions that are most relevant to this proposal and that have informed ORC's staff position with respect to this proposal.

Historic Heritage

The following provisions of the ORPS19 are relevant to this proposal:

Objective 5.2, which seeks that historic heritage resources are recognised and contribute to the region's character and sense of identity.

Policy 5.2.1, which recognises residential and commercial buildings and Coastal historic heritage as characteristic or important to **Otago's** historic heritage.

Policy 5.2.3, which seeks to protect and enhance places and areas of historic heritage by managing (i.e. avoiding, minimising, remedying or mitigating depending on the adverse effects on values of areas and places of historic heritage

¹ Page 7 Statement of Outstanding National Heritage Value: Oamaru Historic Town Centre and Port

The following provisions of the pORPS21 are relevant to this proposal:

Objective HCV-HH-O3, which seeks that Otago's unique historic heritage contributes to the region's character, sense of identity, and social, cultural and economic well-being, and that people's understanding and appreciation of it is enhanced, and that it is protected for future generations against inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

Policy HCV-HH-P, which recognises that Otago's historic heritage includes industrial historic heritage, coastal historic heritage and historic places within the meaning under section 6 of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

ORC staff consider that the proposal to recognise the Ōamaru Historic Town Centre and Port as an NHL is aligned with the relevant policies of the OPRS19 and pORPS21 and will help achieving the relevant objectives stated within these documents.

Public Access (including to the Coast)

The following provisions of the ORPS19 are relevant to this proposal:

Objective 5.1, which seeks to ensure that public access to areas of value to the community is maintained or enhanced.

Policy 5.5.1, which seek to maintain or enhance public access to the natural environment, including the coast, and where there are possible areas of historic significance.

The following provisions of the pORPS21 are relevant to this proposal:

Objective CE-O2, which seeks to ensure that public walking access and recreation opportunities in the coastal environment are maintained and enhanced, and vehicle access is controlled.

Policy CE-P8, which seeks to manage public walking and vehicle access to, along and adjacent to the coastal marine area by maintaining or enhancing public walking access, restricting public walking and vehicle access where necessary and protecting places or areas of special or outstanding historic heritage.

Ensuring that people continue to have access to places and sites of heritage or historical significance is essential to supporting their social, cultural, and economic wellbeing. By protecting these valued heritage and historic locations, the proposal to establish NHL status for the Ōamaru Historic Town Centre and Port will safeguard opportunities for current and future generations to access, experience and appreciate the history, identity, and sense of place this area embodies.

3. Other matters: Providing for lawfully established activities

ORC staff note that the proposed NHL mapping for the Port area encompasses lawfully established activities, including those authorised by resource consents issued by ORC. Figure 1, attached to this submission, illustrates the Port area and identifies specific consented activities that decision-makers should recognise when implementing the NHL as proposed.

4. Conclusion

ORC staff welcome the proposal to give NHL status for the Ōamaru Historic Town Centre and Port, as it aligns with our regional policy framework and contributes to achieving environmental and heritage objectives that benefit the local community and New Zealand's heritage narrative.

Yours sincerely



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Figure 1: Location of ORC issued consents with proposed National Historic Landmark mapping for the Port area