

Council backing big move

Shifting the historic Hamilton Club building to make way for a new development could revive Millennium Project plans to make more use of the Waikato River, writes **Nikki Preston**.

One of Hamilton's most significant historic buildings is to be moved to make way for a development that could start turning the central city toward the river.

The owners of the 1904 Hamilton Club on Grantham St is offering to sell the building to the council for \$1 and move it across the road.

At a closed-doors meeting this week, Hamilton City Council agreed to the moving of the historic club to vacant council-owned land on lower Victoria St beside the Celebrating Age Centre. The decision will be signed off at a full council meeting next week.

A proposed riverside development with offices and a small retail centre offering a restaurant/cafe and boutique shops on the ground floor would replace the old building on the prime riverside land.

Mighty River Power confirmed it had expressed interest in being the anchor tenant for the new development by Hamilton structural engineer Lyall Green.

The company was also looking at other options for its 130 staff, including modifications to its current Peachgrove Rd site in Hamilton East, a spokesperson said.

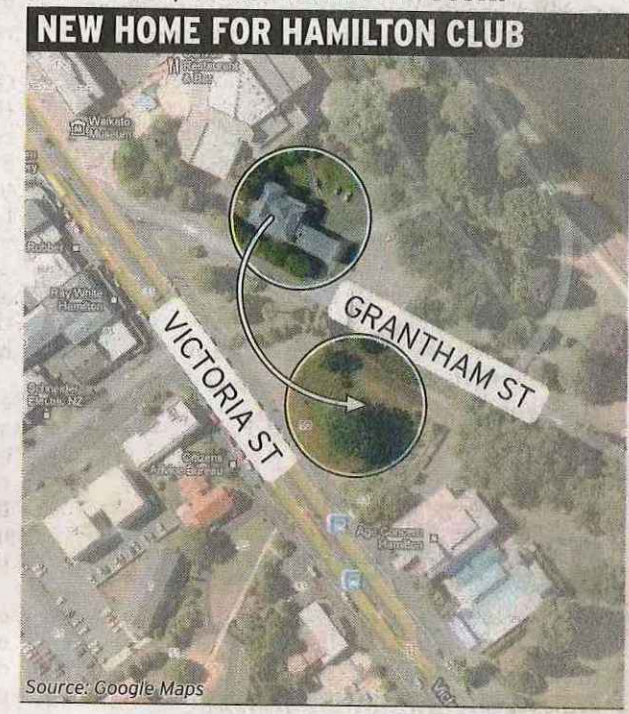
Mr Green was unavailable for comment yesterday, but at the time of purchasing the club in August 2009 had said his plan was to turn the city toward the river with a modern complex which he hoped would lead to the reinstating of plans for the Millennium Project.

Mr Green and business partner Brian Bartels bought the Hamilton Club for \$1.75 million.

The *Waikato Times* understands they have also offered to pay for the majority of the costs involved in moving the club building, including restoring and earthquake proofing it.

The New Zealand Historic Places Trust was unaware of plans to relocate the heritage building.

Trust area manager Gail Henry said



Shifting: The old Hamilton Club is likely to be shifted across Grantham St. Photo: PETER DRURY

the trust was usually involved during the resource consent process.

Hamilton Club president Peter Clough said the club supported the move and had no concerns members would be "left out on the street".

He said the club was looking at a number of options, including moving into the new riverside development or potentially relocating with the building.

"He [Lyall Green] is making provision for us in the new development and we

are looking forward to development happening on the site."

The council has not decided what the club would be used for and has asked for a staff report investigating options.

Possible uses previously discussed by

the council include an arts gallery or a facility for the creative arts community.

The Millennium Foundation asked the council during this week's annual plan hearings to transfer the \$1.9m for the Claudelands Bridge clip-on to reinstate

the Millennium Project, which proposed building a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the river from Ferrybank, a jetty and esplanade.

See Bridge plan a cash saver, page 5



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Hamilton Club president Peter Clough