

REPORT

AS TO A PROPOSED NEW CHAMBER

FOR THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY COMMAND OF
HIS EXCELLENCY.

WELLINGTON.

—
1866.

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PROPOSED NEW CHAMBER FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

No. 1.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. E. RUMSEY to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Auckland, 2nd June, 1866.

I have the honor to inform you that I have this day forwarded, by the steamer "Auckland," the design for the proposed new House of Representatives to be built in Wellington. The Report on the buildings I will forward by the next mail leaving here, as it is not yet quite completed.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

EDWARD RUMSEY.

No. 2.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. E. RUMSEY to the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD.

SIR,—

Auckland, 9th June, 1866.

I have the honor of enclosing herewith the Report of the new House of Representatives proposed to be built at Wellington, and alterations to the present Government Buildings, the drawings of which I forwarded on the 2nd ultimo.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

EDWARD RUMSEY.

Enclosure in No. 2.

REPORT as to a proposed New HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR,—

Auckland, N. Z., 30th May, 1866.

I have the honor of submitting at your request a design for the new House of Representatives proposed to be built at Wellington, and have forwarded the accompanying drawings showing its construction with certain alterations to be made in connection with it to the present General Government Buildings.

The new building, which is to be appropriated as the House of Representatives, will be attached to the present Buildings, and built on a plateau which has been formed at the rear by cutting down the embankment and filling up the low ground to the level on which the present Buildings stand. The principal front will then face Street, and being raised on a terrace considerably above the level of the road will have a commanding position and be effectively seen from the bay and surrounding neighbourhood. In making my design I have preserved the character of the old buildings as nearly as possible in external appearance, which, with a few alterations in the details, can be made to work harmoniously with the new portion.

The internal arrangement will be more readily understood by referring to the ground and first floor plans. The principal entrance being under the tower is approached from the terrace running the entire length of the building, and leads to the lobby, which will be used for the use of the Members, from which the chamber of the House of Representatives will be entered, around which runs a corridor having access with the Speaker's and Ministers' entrances, and having communication with the different rooms in connection with the House, and with the other corridors leading to the Committee Rooms, Refreshment Rooms, Legislative Council Chamber, and the various Government Departments in other parts of the buildings. Over the lobby and corridors surrounding the House of Representatives will be the Strangers' Gallery at the south end, and the Reporters' Gallery at the north end, situated behind the Speaker's chair; and on either side will be galleries for the accommodation of ladies, members, and friends of the Speaker, with cloak and retiring rooms for each. They will be entered by staircases from without, having no communication with the Members' entrances, excepting the Ladies' Gallery, which will be entered from the main entrance under the tower.

There will also be in connection with the new House, a Strong Room, and Room for Records and Papers on the ground floor, and a suite of offices on the upper floor which could be converted into committee rooms.

The general arrangement of the present buildings will be materially altered. The Legislative Council, which is on the north side of the building, will be removed to the chamber now used as the House of Representatives, and the old chamber will be converted into two stories ranging on a level with the floors of the other parts of the building, and each floor subdivided into suites of apartments suitable for Government offices. The old chamber of the House of Representatives will then be re-arranged, and made suitable for the Legislative Council.

I also propose to raise another storey over the refreshment and smoking rooms, whereby the accommodation of two more committee rooms, a spare room, and an upper smoking room, will be obtained. In the present four committee rooms, which are inconveniently small, I propose taking down the partitions, and throwing them into two good sized rooms. And the principal staircase in the old building being dark and awkwardly placed, I should remove to the back of the main building, opposite the principal entrance, where it would be more accessible and better lighted, and by so removing, it would enable the rooms now occupied by the Under Secretary, and room above, being enlarged.

In constructing the new buildings, I propose for the foundations to drive piles of heart of Totara through the made earth to the natural ground, at regular intervals, and frame on them barks of timber, on which the walls of the building will be reared. The internal framing of the entire building would be of red pine. The walls outside should be covered with, and all framing exposed to the weather, be, heart of Totara. The ordinary lining of the walls and floors would be wrought, grooved, and tongued imported boarding; and the panelling and finishing of the House of Representatives, and other rooms, which would not be papered, be finished with red pine, intermixed with kauri. (I should abstain from plastering the walls altogether, on account of the effect which earthquakes might have upon them.) The outside of the building should be painted and sanded and jointed, to correspond with the finishing of the old building, which should also be painted to make the whole uniform.

With reference to the roofs, I consider that slates are the best covering: although they may appear too heavy for a wooden building, I am of opinion, that in a place like Wellington, where the wind has great effect, a heavy covering, such as slates, if properly put on, is far preferable and more serviceable, and is not so much affected by the influence of the wind as any lighter material, such as zinc, tin plates, or iron. I, therefore, should certainly advise the use of slates, even if it should require the walls to be a little stronger to support the extra pressure. I have carefully gone into an estimate of the cost, and taking into consideration the price of material and labour at the present time, I consider, the new portion of the building, which consists of the entire block, including the House of Representatives up to the extent of the new portion of the library, as coloured black on the plans, would amount to £9,500; and the extra expense in raising another storey on the refreshment room, and the various alterations as suggested to be done in the old buildings, with alterations in some of the external details to make it harmonise with the new buildings, and strengthening the roofs throughout the old buildings, by inserting principals and rafters at intervals, and purlins, to give greater support to the common rafters and a longitudinal tie in the roof, of which, I consider, they are greatly in need, would cost a further £2,000

I have, &c.

EDWARD RUMSEY.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.