

14 August 2023

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation (DOC), received on 17 July 2023, in which you asked for information concerning various aspects of Chateau Tongariro's end of lease arrangements.

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *May I ask if you have received your seismic report on the state of the Chateau Tongariro building.*

At this time, the Department has no plans to commission a seismic report on the Chateau Tongariro building.

2. *May I ask if KAH has released to you its seismic report (which apparently said words to the effect that there had been ground movement under the building etc).*

We have recently received a copy of the seismic report and expect to release it in the near future. This part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act, as the information will soon be publicly available on our website.

3. *May I ask if KAH has indeed removed (as has been widely publicised) items from the old building, such as paintings and decorations.*

All chattels within the building were the property of Kah NZ who purchased these items when they took over the lease on the building in 1991 from Tourist Hotel Corporate Ltd.

The Department is not aware of all assets owned by Kah NZ Ltd but can confirm a large number were left in the building at the end of the lease, including a range of paintings, building fittings, and furniture.



4. *Could you list what these are please?*

We are unable to provide further comment on this aspect of your request as we do not hold a list of chattels which were the property of Kah NZ and subsequently removed due to end of lease provisions.

This aspect of your request is refused via section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information requested is not held by the department.

5. *May I ask if DOC has received any offers to take on the lease of the Chateau or purchase it.*

We can confirm we have received enquiries of interest in the Chateau which were expected, and we welcome the interest in this historic place. These have all been acknowledged by DOC.

Once we have determined what the long-term future for the property could be, we will be in a better position to respond to any suggestions or proposals for its use.

DOC is keenly aware the Chateau is an iconic heritage building sitting at the gateway to the Tongariro National Park, which itself has Dual World Heritage for its natural and cultural heritage. We are committed to working with iwi and a range of stakeholders on these issues.

6. *Also how many such offers (if they have come in at all).*

At the time of your request, we have received approximately fifteen enquiries.

7. *And whether they are from investors within New Zealand, from an iwi group or groups or from overseas?*

There are a range of individuals from both New Zealand and overseas who have requested further information about the building and its future. We will release this information to the public when we are in a position to do so.

8. *Could you give an assessment of what condition the building was in when KAH handed it back to DOC.*

The building is in a generally poor condition. We are working with building experts to better understand the current condition of the building and any repairs which will be required. As would be expected of a building which is nearly 100 years old, work and repair is needed in some areas.

9. *What were the maintenance stipulations in their lease of the Chateau?*

The lease is a registered lease and is publicly available through Land Information New Zealand. A copy is attached for your reference.

10. *Are you satisfied that KAH fulfilled the maintenance requirements of their lease (if any)?*

DOC is still in discussions with Kah New Zealand Ltd in relation to the handover of the building and termination of the lease and is unable to comment further.



11. *We have heard painting of the exterior of the building has not been done for about 20 years or more. This apparently is a serious issue in a harsh alpine environment. Is it true exterior painting was inadequately done under KAH's administration.*

DOC is still in discussions with Kah New Zealand Ltd in relation to the handover of the building and termination of the lease and is unable to comment further.

12. *Was DOC responsible to check up on KAH's performance in maintaining the Chateau, and are you satisfied this was done adequately?*

Unlike most tenancy agreements which put the balance of responsibility on landlords to keep buildings in good repair for their tenants, the lease agreement put a clear obligation on Kah as owners of the improvements to keep them in good condition. The maintenance programme was a business decision for the owners and the Department was relatively limited in what it could demand. Contemporary lease agreements are not structured in the way the Kah one was in 1991.

The lease is a registered lease and is available on Land Information New Zealand's website. A copy is attached to our response for your reference.

The document identified for release is outlined in additional detail below:

| Item | Date        | Document description        | Decision         |
|------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1    | 9 July 1991 | Chateau Memorandum of Lease | Released in full |

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

[Redacted signature area]

Nāku noa, nā

[Redacted signature area]

Shan Baththana  
Acting Director, Business Services  
Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai