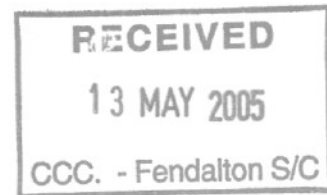




Merivale Precinct Society

Incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957
P.O.Box 36397, Merivale, CHRISTCHURCH



MERIVALE PRECINCT SOCIETY SUBMISSION

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2006

The Merivale Precinct Society wishes to make comment on various matters pertaining to the Christchurch City Council Draft Annual Plan 2006. This is a pro forma submission which will be developed and expanded upon at the time of the hearings as the Society wishes to be heard.

HERITAGE

In the Draft Annual Plan there is reference made under City development that the "Christchurch City Council has major commitments to heritage conservation and to revitalising the Central City. Meanwhile, there is an immediate need to guide newly urbanising parts of the City by providing greater clarity and integration through area plans."

Merivale as an inner suburb of the City has been subjected to intensive development over the years to such an extent that it has now reached crisis point with regard to heritage. It has evolved into a highly desirable area to live, work, shop, socialise and be educated. Rightly or wrongly, the very things that make Merivale so special such as the character and history of early Christchurch, the gracious homes and gardens and the quaintness of the housing stock has been put in jeopardy. Heritage has become a finite resource.

Merivale's amenity and character is being stripped almost daily and a relentless surge of boring sameness and uninspiring design reflected in the new development only highlights the loss. The resulting public concern to protect and preserve heritage is constantly being undermined by a lack of funding for protected buildings let alone positive incentives such as heritage property being given high value instead of the opposite.

The continuing battle to save Leinster House and preserve it in Merivale is seen as a watershed situation. If this protected House cannot be saved, then any hope of preserving the past for future generations is looking very bleak. After all the public assumes that a protected building means just that, when in reality all protected buildings are at risk, whilst the City Plan stands as it does.

TREE PROTECTION

Substantial trees are continuing to be cut down during subdivision of properties, or if left, subjected to such stress whilst developers work around them or build too close to their roots that their fate is sealed ultimately leading to their demise. Trees are the lungs of the City. They too, are a finite resource which is steadily dwindling. It is not enough to plant trees on

public land to compensate. It takes many years for trees to become impressive specimens which add colour, texture, shade, reduce pollution and provide a haven for bird life. Policing of protected trees is inadequate and funds are needed to ensure Council staff can adequately monitor the tree stock. The City must look at mandatory alternatives. Other cities and countries have a much greater respect for the value of significant trees and a laissez-faire attitude in Christchurch is simply no longer acceptable.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Burgeoning growth in Merivale has resulted in serious pressure on the infrastructure and traffic management. For too long it's been a case of "patch and obstruct" with no long term vision for the suburb and few funds at Community Board level. Considering the revenue that Council is collecting for all the building consents in the suburb, it is alarming that little thought is being given to the impact that it is having on the infrastructure. Car parking and traffic is at crisis level and can no longer be ignored.

UNDERGROUND WIRING

This Society has made numerous approaches to Council including a Citywide petition to have extra funds allocated to increase the amount of under wiring of City streets annually. Instead a policy of coercion has transpired with residents being literally blackmailed if they want their street to have underground wiring! It is time rates were used for the purpose intended or revenue was secured by other means such as a hotel surcharge or charging admission to the museum, art gallery and Mona Vale. All of which are frequented by a large number of tourists at ratepayers' expense.

SAFETY

In recent years a policy has developed of planting natives indiscriminately and with no long term thought to clutter and obstructing views. Open space in public parks and along public walkways has always been a desired outcome to ensure residents' safety. Now the opposite is occurring as bush being planted in the last decade is becoming increasingly dense, dark and uninviting. Funding is necessary so that serious maintenance and pruning is undertaken.

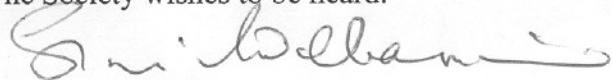
PARKS & GARDENS

General maintenance in parks and the Botanical Gardens seems to be at an all time low. There is an air of neglect and untidiness. It appears as though staff numbers have been reduced significantly. Compare the Dunedin Botanical Gardens which is an absolute showpiece. Certainly there is concern within the Christchurch gardening fraternity at the general shabbiness and lack of follow up through the seasons.

COMMUNITY BOARD FUNDING

There needs to be much more thought given to allocation of ratepayer's funds back into the respective Community Board areas. It is interesting to note, for example, how little funding is directed into Merivale which is badly disadvantaged when one considers the growth occurring. There is no library, swimming pool or community centre yet the intensive development warrants such services

The Society wishes to be heard.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Gina Williamson', written in dark ink.

Gina Williamson

Chairperson

Merivale Precinct Society.

13th May 2005. .