

### 3. BEDFORD ROW DEVELOPMENT: PRIVATE USE OF ROAD SPACE

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The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the principle of using legal road space in parts of Bedford Row for private building development, and to give preliminary consideration to a proposed development which will involve extending a building onto Bedford Row in exchange for providing a public right of way through the site to Cashel Street.

#### BACKGROUND

In 1997 architect Ian Athfield was commissioned by the Council to undertake a study of the area generally bounded generally by Madras, Tuam, Manchester Streets and Bedford Row. In March 1998 he produced the report *“Christchurch Heritage - a new life - a study for the rejuvenation of inner city Christchurch for the Christchurch City Council”*. This drew to attention not only the significance of many of the older warehouses and other building stock in the study area, but also the opportunities for recognition and enhancement of the small lanes and unused spaces, with a view to “repopulating” this part of the central city with mixed uses including residential. Although at the time the Council did not actively itself pursue the detailed proposals suggested, the document over time has tended to become somewhat of a “blueprint” for the area. More recently, the Central City Mayoral Forum has confirmed that this area, including Bedford Row, is key to the central city revitalisation initiative.

In Bedford Row, the Council has already provided funding for strengthening a heritage building (old horse bazaar) at the eastern end of the street, now being refurbished as a dance studio and, subject to performance by the owner, will contribute towards both street and building improvements to three buildings at the western end of the street (Denis Harwood).

With these and other proposals for property development/refurbishment in Bedford Row pending, Ian Athfield has been commissioned to prepare a long-term plan for the street, and an early draft included the idea of narrowing the street in places by allowing buildings to project into the street. This would serve a variety of purposes, including adding interest to the streetscape, providing windbreaks, adding flexibility for the development of sites, and allowing the covering of unattractive facades.

Preliminary consultation is at present talking place with owners and occupiers before presenting a proposal to the Council. This is being undertaken with the assistance of Michael Inder of Creative Business Solutions. It has resulted in detailed and useful feedback and strong support from building owners and occupiers to proceed towards an agreed plan for the street, which is already starting to “revitalise” with a mixture of warehouse, showroom, café/bar and residential activities all developing.

It should be noted that the 1998 report suggested an overall development plan for the larger area, which would, inter alia, “treat Bedford Row as an accessway only and sell areas within the street for positive habitation”. For particular proposals to proceed, such as the one now received, the Council would need to agree to the principle (subject to necessary road stopping procedures, etc) of use of public road space for private building use.

#### THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

Property developers Shaun Stockman and Dean Marshall, who already own other successfully developed sites in Bedford Row (eg, Sammy’s Jazz Review), have recently purchased a property at Nos 19-21 Bedford Row. This is on the north side of the street and extends north to Cashel Street (Nos 208-210). There is a two-storey building on the Cashel Street frontage, but the Bedford Row side is currently used for car parking. They propose to erect a three level building that will have residential/office uses on the upper floors and a restaurant and bar on the ground floor. The possibility of linkages through the various smaller streets and spaces in the area was identified in the 1998 study as a means of enhancing pedestrian scale and accessibility. The fact that this property extends through to Cashel Street, and is quite close to its intersection with Liverpool Street, provides that opportunity.

After discussion with Ian Athfield and members of the Central city team, the owners have had a development proposal prepared showing a building intruding 3m into Bedford Row, with a right of way of similar area, shown on the western boundary of the property. A further right of way, 1.8m in width, passes through the rear courtyard and the Cashel Street building, emerging through an existing opening in the façade to Cashel Street (attached). The 1998 plan did suggest a building in this part of Bedford Row extending on to the street, thus creating the opportunity for interior courtyard space, and this proposal picks up that theme.

The developers are desirous of progressing this proposal as soon as possible, as they have some tenants already secured. Issues of survey, legal ownership, relative values of land, street stopping, etc, will need to be resolved, and at this stage, in addition to seeking Council agreement to the general principle of using legal road space in Bedford Row, it would be helpful to obtain preliminary approval for this particular proposal. In the future there may be further proposals on other parts of the street, including, for example, on the façade of the Bedford Row car park, again foreshadowed in the 1998 report.

Before final approval is given, the implications of this proposal need further discussion with both City Streets and Urban Design staff, with issues such as the retention of pedestrian access in Bedford Row, public safety in the right of way and other development matters such as car parking requirements to be satisfied.

In conclusion, this proposal raises some exciting possibilities for Bedford Row and its linkages to nearby streets, but for it to proceed agreement is firstly needed with the principle, as identified in the 1998 Athfield report, of using part of the present road space for building extension or development.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council approve the principle of the use of legal road space in parts of Bedford Row for private building development.
  2. That this particular proposal be endorsed for further development, taking into account the following:
    - (a) The inclusion and suitable design of a public thoroughfare to Cashel Street.
    - (b) Any traffic/pedestrian implications of the use of the road for the extension of the building.
    - (c) Input from Council urban design staff.
    - (d) Council approval of the detailed design, in particular that part on present legal street.
    - (e) Appropriate legal procedures and agreements relating to street stopping, rights of way, exchange or sale of land, etc.