

2. CENTRAL CITY CULTURAL PRECINCT

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The purpose of this report is to seek further Council endorsement of the central city cultural precinct, and agree on its boundaries and to agree that this special precinct area be taken into account when dealing with Council issues/works in this area in the future.

INTRODUCTION

At its November 2003 meeting the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee received a deputation from the Cultural Precinct Stakeholders group. Partners in the group include the Arts Centre, Christchurch Botanic Gardens, Canterbury Museum, Christ's College, Christchurch Art Gallery-Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Our City-O-Tautahi, Centre of Contemporary Art (COCA), Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing, Christchurch Tramway Ltd, and Christchurch Cathedral.

The deputation outlined the potential untapped marketing opportunity for a recognised arts, culture and heritage precinct within the central city. It considered that the new Art Gallery, the Museum redevelopment, the opening of Our City and ongoing public and private sector investment in the existing established products and infrastructure presented a wonderful opportunity to position the Worcester Boulevard and vicinity from the Cathedral to the Museum/Christ's College as New Zealand's premier art, cultural and heritage precinct, and had adopted this as their mission statement.

Their vision is "to build on the strengths of the Cultural Precinct to develop distinctive joint marketing initiatives that will promote the Cultural Precinct to residents and visitors and to visually link the Cultural Precinct through co-ordinated streetscaping, signage and planting".

The partners have so far committed to:

- Funding for Stage 1 – project scoping
- Development of the Cultural Precinct brand
- Commitment to ongoing joint marketing of the Cultural Precinct
- Commitment to a long term strategy.

They saw the Council's role as:

- Commitment to a partnership between CCC and the Cultural Precinct
- Improving the visual unity of the Cultural Precinct: bollards, paving, street furniture, planting
- Using the brand for signage, maps, banners
- Positioning the Cultural Precinct with residents
- Link with Stage 5 redevelopment of the Square.

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee decided:

1. That the initiatives of the Cultural Precinct Stakeholder's Group be supported in principle.
2. That a report be prepared investigating the integration of artworks, banners and design, to provide recognition to the cultural precinct.

The investigations sought are being undertaken by the Marketing Unit (City Promotions), and are still at an early stage, given the need to work in with the branding strategy being developed by the Cultural Precinct partners.

While the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee's resolution goes some way towards covering the matters identified by the stakeholders' group, there are matters beyond the scope of that Committee which the group would wish the Council to be committed to, across the broader spectrum of Council activities, and this is an opportunity, through the Strategy and Finance Committee, for an integrated approach.

Future physical works in the area for example including paving, street furniture and planting could follow a consistent theme to emphasise the precinct. The current proposals for Stage V of Cathedral Square go some way towards this, with the intended extension of the boulevard concept in Worcester Street between Oxford Terrace and the Square. The cultural precinct boundaries stretch from Cathedral Square, along the Boulevard to Rolleston Avenue, including the Botanic Gardens, through to Christ's College, and also extending north along the Avon River between Oxford Terrace and Durham Street/Cambridge Terrace to incorporate the Provincial Council Buildings. There are no specific requests for expenditure at this time and future requests will still go through the usual Committee process for approval.

This can also be assisted through recognition of the precinct and its significance by the Central City Mayoral Forum, which has in fact endorsed the cultural precinct concept.

It should also be noted that the Council is in effect part of the stakeholders' group given its direct or indirect involvement with many of the group's members (eg Art Gallery, Gardens, Our City, Arts Centre, Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing), and this should also help in achieving an co-ordinated approach.

Recommendation: That, noting there are no specific requests for expenditure at this time and future requests will still go through the usual Committee process for approval, the Council recognise and support the initiatives of the Cultural Precinct partners and confirm an intention to adopt an integrated approach and partnership in relation to future physical works and improvements, and the marketing of the area.