

2007/08 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN SUBMISSION

Submissions close on 11 May 2007

I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings to be held between Monday 28 May 2007 and Tuesday 5 June 2007.

Are you completing this submission:

On behalf of a group or organisation

If you are representing, how many people do you represent?

Five

Name:

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Date:

11 May 2007

Your Submission:

The Christchurch Heritage Trust would draw the Council's attention to the attached Submission of 24th February 2006 made on the Council's Proposed Earthquake Strengthening Policy with particular regard to Heritage Buildings, which it considers also relevant to the 2006-16 LTCCP

The Trust would reinforce its arguments for the Council to take positive action to assist Heritage Building Owners in meeting the Building Act requirements if the city's heritage buildings are to be retained for the future

It would point out that the Trust itself is taking a number of steps through

1. Working with Canterbury University to find more cost effective technical options to heritage building strengthening
2. The engagement of Ernst & Young, Financial Advisors to look at taxation measures that the Government might be persuaded to introduce, to provide some relief to heritage building owners
3. Obtained the results of a limited study by Council's structural engineering consultants, Holmes Consultants Ltd, to the effect that it would take about 37% of this sample's current capital rating value to meet the cost of strengthening. Further work in this direction needs to be done over a much wider sample as indicated in our submission of 24th February 2006 to more accurately measure the impact on building owners. An initial conclusion with the rapid rise in building values over the last three years that the owners will have the equity but not the cash flow to fund the upgrading. This may help focus any package of assistance to prevent owners pushing to demolish rather than upgrade Christchurch's precious heritage buildings.

24 February 2006

Christchurch City Council
Box 237
CHRISTCHURCH

**SUBMISSION BY CHRISTCHURCH HERITAGE TRUST ON THE COUNCIL'S
PROPOSED EARTHQUAKE STRENGTHENING POLICY WITH PARTICULAR
REGARD TO HERITAGE BUILDINGS**

The Trust has studied the proposed Council policy for the Building Act 2004 and the regulations promulgated from that, as well as a report commissioned by the Heritage Section of the Council from Homes Consulting covering 372 heritage buildings in Christchurch, and advises as follows:

1. It is acknowledged that the council is required to have a draft policy out for submissions and finalised by May 2006, under the new 2004 Building Act.
2. The Trust is mindful that a large number of the heritage buildings in the city have not been strengthened or, if they have been strengthened, they have not been up to a sufficient level of Code to enable them to withstand a major earthquake not if, but when, it happens in Christchurch.
3. The Homes Consulting Report identifies a possible capital cost over the 372 buildings of \$250 million to upgrade some of the buildings, possibly a third, to two-thirds Code and the balance of two-thirds to one third Code. Further costs have to be added to this estimate to cover change of use matters such as egress, fire protection, disabled access and architectural fees. It would be fair to say that this balance therefore would be nearer \$300 million for that stock of buildings to be upgraded to a point where they could withstand an earthquake of a magnitude envisaged by the Act. Further, if all 372 buildings are strengthened to full Code, then a cost of approximately \$500 million is envisaged to ensure that they withstand a major earthquake, save lives and, as importantly, be in a position that, if damaged they can still be repaired and therefore preserve the heritage. At \$1344m per building this shows the major impact of requirement. Further research as to the govt. valuations of the 372 buildings would further illustrate the impact of the proposals on building owners.
4. It is regrettable that the Council has to wrestle with this problem, which is soon to become the community's problem, without any recognition by Government of the cost of these measures, nor any support suggested by way of tax relief to enable the owners of these properties to, where relevant, write off the cost of repairs as Repairs and Maintenance over, say, five years, which would at least give a tax relief, nor has the Council itself suggested any subsidy towards these costs by way of rate relief, remission from fees, or capital contributions of a scale and keeping with the \$500 million to enable the community to be assisted to bring about the preservation of the 372 listed buildings.

5. The city, without this support, will be faced with a large number of building owners, particularly Group 3 and 4, wishing to demolish their buildings rather than strengthen them. From discussions with various structural engineers, it is apparent that strengthening an unreinforced, mostly brick building to two-thirds Code is a major exercise of major cost, and a disruption to the occupants of the building. Regrettably, those buildings that have been most developed, e.g. put into apartments, have some strengthening and so on, will have to be vacated for up to six months while extensive work is being done, and one wonders whether the expense is worth-while compared with starting again.
6. It may be that this will lead the Council and heritage supporters to list their absolute priorities for buildings to be saved, rather than the extensive list we have, plus the suggestion that character houses also be added to the list.
7. Referring to the specific provisions of the draft policy, the Heritage Trust will support a minimum level of 30 years to achieve these changes, some moderation of the definitions, if possible, for change of use.
8. The major work required for multi-level unreinforced mostly brick buildings, would be less disruptive if the Council allowed, where the heritage fabric is not affected, e.g. on rear boundaries and side boundaries, for the strengthening to be carried on outside the building fabric, perhaps allowing even, in a side street, use of the footpath for footings and so on. This may be new ground for the Council, but if the heritage problem is to be addressed effectively, such concessions from the Council may be necessary to allow this policy to proceed.
9. It is essential that both central and local government, together with the community, work towards a solution to this problem but, frankly, the requirements of the new Building Act as they stand, without any support from either party in Government, is unrealistic in its requirements, and such support to work together to solve this problem should be sought at an early date.

The Christchurch Heritage Trust welcomes an opportunity to discuss this matter further with relevant Council officers.

Derek Anderson
Chairman
Christchurch Heritage Trust