

21. CITY MALL HIGH STREET AMPHITHEATRE

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Peter Atkinson, Area Engineer Central, DDI 371-1662 Andrew Craig, Landscape Architect, DDI 371-1615
Corporate Plan Output: On Street Management	

The purpose of this report is to advise the committee of concerns with the High Street amphitheatre in City Mall and to seek direction for future changes or upgrading of this area.

The High Street amphitheatre is a useful facility in City Mall and has achieved many of the objectives that it was designed to achieve. It is currently being used as an entertainment area for buskers, cultural concerts, “kids in town”, an outdoor seating area, an area for congregation and a space for small commercial business. It is a popular outdoor eating/entertainment area.

Problems with the area at present concern the impact of the amphitheatre structure on adjacent business, the number of chipped tiles, the condition of the grassed areas and the impact of the easterly wind on activities. Representatives of the local shop owners will express directly to the Committee their concerns and impact on the use of their buildings. Since the construction of the Mall, there has been the introduction of skate boarding and this activity has had a noticeable impact on the tiled areas which has detracted from the appearance. One of the successful features of the area is the grass terraces. The use of these terraces for a wide range of functions has placed heavy demands such that the terraces need to be either increased in size or given special treatment to withstand the activities that take place on them. The complete lack of shelter and the effective funnel caused by the shape of the intersection of high and Cashel Streets can make this area unpleasant. It is not unusual for activities in this area to be transferred to other part of the City to avoid the unpleasant environment. The orientation of this area to the north and west provides the opportunity for this location to be as equally commercially attractive as many other areas in the central city.

The most immediate concern is the adverse effects that the iron structure is said to have on business in this area. This concern generally relates to blocking views to a shop and being cut off from the open space. The structure is an architectural feature design to give a sense of enclosure, a framework to support the climbing roses and add character to this locality. Parts of this structure have already been removed to assist with some of the above problems, the roses have failed to rise onto the structure and it serves no useful purpose as a windbreak. Its immediate removal would not have a significant impact on the effective use of this area.

The orientation of this part of the mall is ideal if it were not for the easterly wind. While there are three businesses that have taken advantage of this out door location their trade is influenced by the weather. The close proximity of two international hotels, the location being on the route between the City Centre and the Christchurch Polytechnic, highlight this area as unique place. This area has the potential to become commercially more attractive if the area is enhanced. It is recommended that this location be given a high priority within the initiatives to revitalise the City centre.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the steel structure be removed.
 2. That this area be considered as part of the initiatives to revitalise the City Centre.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.