

33. WORCESTER STREET LATIMER SQUARE TO CATHEDRAL SQUARE AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS

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Corporate Plan Output: On Street Management	

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to proceed generally in accordance with the proposed development plan for the section of Worcester Street between Manchester Street and Latimer Square.

An important project in this years works programme, is the upgrading of the above section of Worcester Street to complete the development of the main pedestrian access across the City between the Botanical Gardens in the west and Latimer Square in the east. The Boulevard in the west has proved to be an important element in the layout of the City. It provides a visual link between the Arts Centre and Cathedral Square, it has acted as a catalyst to enhance locality and it has proved to pleasant pedestrian concourse. Many of the features that have made this link as successful as it is, are proposed to be included in the eastern section, recognising that the eastern section has its own special features.

The layout proposed for the eastern section of Worcester Street is illustrated in the attached diagram. Salient features of the diagram include: A widened footpath on the south side of the street, avenue tree planting, no stopping of vehicles along the southern side of the street and cobblestone paving of pedestrian areas. Features that are unique to the eastern side include; a narrow two-way carriageway, angle parking on the northern side of the street and the introduction of grass plots.

There are differences between the east and west sections that, reflect the different characters of Worcester Street. In the eastern section of Worcester Street, the commercial development is more extensive, there is a higher parking demand, the buildings are closer to the road, there are no trams and pedestrians volumes are not as high. A consequence of these lower pedestrians volumes is the proposal to introduce into the footpath a number of grass or landscaped areas. These areas will be designed to achieve two objectives, viz: an enhanced amenity and to act as a filter to reduce the amount and improve the quality of the rainwater runoff. These green areas will also provide a visual connection to draw Latimer Square into the centre of the City.

The proposed development has been circulated for public comment. Submissions received from property occupiers in the street were generally in support of the proposal. Matters of concern related to the horse-hitching rail, the need for close attention to the maintenance of the green areas and the particular requirements of the telecommunication provider in the street. These requirements principally related to access to manholes, position of trees and the need to provide a loading area for larger vehicles. Discussions have been held with staff and their concerns can be accommodated.

The two residents groups in the areas also made submissions. The first group from Chester Street set out the importance of the Museum/Latimer axis, the integrity and consistency of the axis. They recognised that there are differences between the east and west sides of the street because of the land uses and buildings. However, since the only above ground elements, in three dimension terms, will be the trees it is important that they be arranged as an "avenue". In the detailed design it intended that the both the spacing and the longitudinal position is better coordinated.

The second group, the Inner City East Neighbourhood Group, preferred an alternative layout with parallel parking between the trees, a wider carriageway, no grass berms and equal footpaths on either side. They suggested that it should be more like the section between the Cathedral and Manchester Street. They would like the road to be similar to the Boulevard with no angle parking and no grass areas, which they consider could become scruffy though, lack of maintenance over time. This group, which consists of six people, also recommended that the section of Latimer Square, between Gloucester Street and Worcester Street, is upgraded in the same way. They also recommended that provision be made for motorcycles, bicycle and disabled parking with special provision for bind persons at the corners.

The suggestions by the Inner City East group for a different focus for the street have needed to be balanced with the objectives for the street. The scheme, which was suggested by this group, has many good features but gives the street more traffic emphasis and less to the pedestrian. The wide pedestrian path on the south side of the street is the most dominate feature of the Boulevard and if this feature is play an important part in the eastern side of the pedestrian axis then the design should be generally in accordance with the scheme plan as proposed.

There are a number of small changes to the scheme plan as illustrated which will incorporate change recommended as a result of public consultation and the position of underground services. These changes include the position of the trees, the alignment of the kerbs and the possible introduction of grass areas on the north side of the street. Details will be provided at the meeting.

Recommendation: That the development of Worcester Street proceed generally in accordance with the attached scheme plan.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** Not seen by Chairman.