

Submission of the Christchurch Civic Trust LTCCP 2009 – 19

April 2009

1 Heritage protection

Introduction

Concerns have been raised about the lack of care for listed and unlisted heritage buildings in our city – especially in the city's inner core where there is a high concentration of heritage assets that give Christchurch a mark of distinction.

Those concerns highlight a raft of issues surrounding heritage protection, in respect of which section 6 of the Resource Management Act makes it explicitly clear that the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development is "***a matter of national importance.***" That status implies that the Christchurch City Council and the community at large have an obligation to present and future citizens to protect the city's diverse stock of more than 600 irreplaceable listed heritage assets. These assets provide meaningful links with the historic development of Christchurch and also enhance the appeal of the city to residents and visitors alike.

As a point of principle, when a listed heritage property has been purchased by a company or individual, the new owners should be self-motivated and/or encouraged to maintain the property in good order, thereby sustaining the historic fabric of the city .

Equally, if a listed heritage property is assessed as being wilfully neglected so as to hasten an opportunity to demolish it for redevelopment, it would be in the national interest for the Council (a) to take steps to require the property owner to maintain the building in good order and (b) where appropriate, to offer financial and advisory technical support for essential conservation work within limits of available budget resources.

There may possibly be some reluctance to take such steps (a) on the assumption that they might be contrary owners' property rights and also (b) in the belief that there already are adequate heritage conservation safeguards in the City Plan. However, that latter presumption is somewhat "shaky" on the basis of the following current heritage group classifications:

- **Group 1** - buildings, places and objects of international or national significance, the protection of which is considered as being ***essential.***
- **Group 2** - buildings, places and objects which are of national or regional importance, the protection of which is seen as being ***very important*** where this can be ***reasonably achieved.***
- **Group 3** - buildings, places and objects which are of regional or metropolitan significance the protection of which is seen as being ***important,*** but also only where this can be ***reasonably achieved.***

- **Group 4** - buildings, places and objects which are of metropolitan significance and/or involve a contribution to the heritage of the city, the protection of which is seen by the Council as being *desirable*.

These classifications are seen to imply that heritage assets in Groups 2, 3 and 4 are somehow of less importance than heritage assets in Group 1. Prospective investors might thus claim that in prevailing conditions it is unreasonable to conserve/protect a listed heritage asset – especially (for example) in respect of ageing buildings on sites with high potential land values.

The Christchurch Civic Trust believes that – in the context of the provisions of section 6 of the Resource Management Act - listed assets need to be prudently identified and conserved for their own inherent heritage, social and environmental values. For effective heritage protection, such assets should be assigned under the City Plan to a **single group**, on the basis that a heritage building, place or object is either worth saving or it is not.

The Civic Trust also advocates the reinstatement of **character groups** of conjoined heritage buildings of compatible design attributes that create a number of distinctive precincts within the inner city. Such group classifications were deleted from the City Plan in 2004 as a result of an appeal to the Environment Court by a private developer. Fortuitously, many character groups still retain their heritage ambience, but the individual buildings lack the safeguards of effective conservation measures.

In 1998 the Christchurch City Council adopted the charter of ICOMOS (*the International Council of Monuments and Sites New Zealand*). This provides - in spirit – a basis for the protection of all listed heritage buildings, places and objects in accordance with the Long Term Council Community Plan, which foresees making Christchurch the most attractive city in New Zealand. The City Plan foresees the Council and community as being “*leaders in protecting our natural and built heritage, and ... at the forefront of new urban design.*” However, forward-looking leadership needs to be backed up by rational protective measures along with some measure of financial support to the owners of heritage buildings.

It is concluded that:

- the city’s current stock of heritage assets contributes significantly to both the amenity appeal and the economic sustainability of Christchurch.
- In the context of section 6 of the Resource Management Act, all listed heritage items deserve to be considered **equally worthy** of adequate and lasting protection.
- Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 should be replaced with a **single protective classification** for all listed heritage assets identified by the City Council, which would be in keeping with the intentions of the Resource Management Act.
- Certain current City Plan rules may need to be reviewed to harmonise with a single - tier classification.

- The Christchurch City Council has an opportunity to serve as a key player in the national quest to safeguard irreplaceable heritage assets for the benefit of future generations.

With particular reference to the LTCCP the Civic Trust agrees with the Council's ongoing support for heritage protection by way of direct funding (Vol 1 page 200) however we note that the planned and forecasted amounts are less than proposed in the LTCCP 2006 – 16. We would ask that the item mentioned on page 6 of the summary document under Major Projects / Central City revitalisation “ \$7.1m for heritage protection in the central city “ be correlated to the above. Is this additional expenditure ?

The Civic Trust believes that the amount that the Council intends to spend on Heritage protection in the LTCCP should be increased significantly.

2 Extended city tram route

The Christchurch Civic Trust does not support this expenditure, on the grounds that:

- a The proposal is not part of a comprehensive inner city public passenger transport scheme.
- b The “tourist” based transport as proposed, will not assist in the inner city public transport, and therefore be of very limited value to the inner city urban redevelopment proposals.
- c Such expenditure must be directed towards a public passenger transport scheme which first provides a service to local residents and in doing so, will be of obvious advantage to tourism.

3 Hagley Oval - To develop Test Cricket Facilities at Hagley Oval Project 169

The Christchurch Civic Trust notes the following points:

- a There is concern at the lack of detail on the LTCCP proposal to develop test cricket facilities at Hagley Oval. The LTCCP documents provide no detailed information, as shown in the following extract from the LTCCP documents:
Vol 1, Pg 29 “\$1 million over 2010-11 to develop test cricket facilities at Hagley Oval”
The Civic Trust understands that Canterbury Cricket is intending to create an earth embankment around part of the oval.
Apart from the embankment, what would be the requirements to upgrade Hagley Oval to International Test Cricket Standards?
 - i What new structures would be needed? eg: toilet blocks, catering facilities, lighting, news media facilities and a grandstand?
 - ii Are there sufficient car parks? Any new car parks in Hagley Park would require the approval of the Minister of Conservation in accordance with the Christchurch City (Reserves) Empowering Act 1971 (Amended 1974).

- b The Hagley Park Management Plan 2007 was approved August 2007 and Project 31, Hagley Oval fence, was rejected at the Council meeting. Of the 56 projects discussed in the Hagley Park/Botanic Gardens Master Plan, Project 31 received the most submissions from individuals and organisations, 186, with 83% of submitters opposing the project and no submitters in favour. The remaining 7% were 3% in conditional favour, 2% opposed with conditions and the balance of 2% were suggestions.
- c The Civic Trust notes from 'Analysis Report - Hagley Park/Christchurch Botanic Gardens Submissions August 2007' the following comments:
 - i from the submission of the **Riccarton Cricket Club** (Pg 95):

"... based on Hagley Oval strongly oppose the project (*for a fence*). [They consider that,] apart from [the proposed fence] ruining the natural look of the Oval and being a potential nightmare for the Council to maintain, the Oval is the venue for club cricket only and not for representative cricket. [They believe that] part of the beauty of the Oval is its openness, its attraction to spectators who can come in and out of the venue freely and the strong feel of an English Green [it imparts].
 - ii and from the submission of the **Department of Conservation's** (Pg 161):

The department [also suggests that] the retention of the present low level of built development [in the Park] should be recognised as an overarching objective, and from a starting point in formulating management policies. [It says] high impact built elements such as driveways, car parks and buildings need to be very carefully considered in terms of necessity, cumulative effects and the overall public interest, and all alternatives fully considered before such developments are put forward for possible approval. [It advises] the plan needs to present a framework that clearly stipulates such a process [and suggests] a key objective should be to hold or reduce the collective 'footprint' of buildings within the Park. [Also that] regular audits of building use and their appropriateness, and assessment of the continuing need for other structures, should be provided for in the plan.
- d. The Civic Trust also notes from the "Hagley Park Management Plan 2007", (Pg 78):

2.0 OPEN SPACES COMPONENT

The Hagley Park open spaces are a significant element of the Park's English heritage style landscape character. They provide a contrast to the woodlands, a place for sporting activities and permit the vistas for which the Park is renowned.

Objective 2;

To protect the open spaces of Hagley Park and the visual amenity of the road users. To promote Hagley Park as a major feature of the open space systems of the inner city.

and (Pg 87):

Objective 13;:

To maximise the recreational potential of Hagley Park but limit ancillary developments such as buildings and car parking which detract from the park's landscape value.

- e. The Civic Trust further notes that the Reserves Act 1977. Section 41 **Management Plans**, subsection (11) states "*The administering body shall in the exercise of its functions comply with the management plan for the reserve and any amendment thereof, being, in the case of a plan or an amendment that requires the approval of the Minister, a plan or an amendment so approved.*"
- The proposal would not comply with the Hagley Park Management Plan 2007 and thus, would be in breach of the Reserves Act 1997.

Recommendation

That Project 169 be deleted from the 2009 - 19 LTCCP.

4 Sports Facilities

The Christchurch Civic Trust would urge the City Council to continue the urgent development of facilities for the growing numbers of young people who are seeking to participate in a variety of sports. *The Draft Metropolitan Sports Facilities Plan* published last year needs to be reprioritised because of limited Council finance. Every effort should be made to seek partnerships for other sources of funding after detailed plans are made available.

The investigation of a site for Canterbury rowing away from the over crowded Kerrs Reach does not seem to have made progress despite the danger of polluted water and collisions due to overcrowding. It is noted that there is an increasing number of schools participating in the sport despite the cost.

The establishment of a rowing facility to meet international standards is a matter of urgency. Rowing New Zealand is using Lake Karapiro as a world class regatta site. Christchurch would also benefit economically and socially by providing a similar facility. It is a great pity that our potential international team participants have to move to the North Island for their training.

Recommendation

A financial allowance for the development of rowing be included into the LTCCP.

The Christchurch Civic Trust wish to discuss the main points in this written submission at the hearings to be held in May.

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