

# INTRODUCTION

## Executive Statement

This study is a Contextual Historical Overview of Christchurch City; it has attempted to identify a comprehensive range of tangible and intangible heritage values and items which include built and modified landscapes, places, structures and features that define the City as a unique place within New Zealand. It is proposed that this document will set a framework to assess places and items of cultural heritage to Christchurch City.

It recognises that the Christchurch City Council has compiled a considerable amount of material for the preparation and analysis of the schedule of protected items within the District Plan. Much of this was used to provide overall direction for more detailed work, or to undertake broader contextual studies linking associated research for appropriate heritage outcomes.

The thematic analysis has identified that there is a range of protected items across all areas, although, no assessment has been made on how representative these may be, nor whether they are the most appropriate examples.

This is the first stage of an ongoing project and it is important to understand that this is a work in progress. It should, therefore, be regarded as an initial process of gathering historical information, and reassessing how we see the history of Christchurch, and describing what best represents its past (Refer Map 1).

## General Recommendations

Analysis of current listings has identified particular areas where further research and assessment is required. The purpose of this will be to add to existing resources, or to better understand specific places in the context of a broader cultural landscape, or to fill identified gaps by developing a wider co-ordination and assessment of places considered as historic (for example the consideration of modern architectural heritage).

The priority for further projects should focus on adding to material associated with historic areas in central and inner suburban locations. These areas are facing the most significant development pressure and should be investigated first. Individual places under any potential threat should also be pro-actively investigated and options presented that best protect the heritage values of that place.

Greater consideration should be given to places or elements individually protected under the City Plan but also identified or potentially related historically as “Cultural Landscapes”. Christchurch City Council should develop a method of cultural landscape overlays to manage such sites in a more comprehensive manner.

The Christchurch City Council has undertaken a large number of studies which identify important street character, but these need to be developed further to include issues specifically relating to heritage.

This contextual history should be treated as a dynamic document, widely published and regularly updated.

The presence of historic places can often only be confirmed by specific and detailed research and site survey. Potential sites need to be identified, in order to identify, manage and, where appropriate, protect the resource or mitigate adverse effects on them.

Strategies for identifying further potential sites will include:

- a) Predictive modelling - the development of the city and its infrastructure will determine the types of historic places and sites which potentially still remain. Analysis of the development of infrastructure will contribute to a predictive model of where certain types of places are likely to be located. Methods such as the mapping of transport expansion, subdivision patterns and municipal boundary evolutions can assist in confirming site survey observations.
- b) The analysis of currently recorded places and sites within their wider context. While there are many recorded within Christchurch city, their context needs to be examined in more detail.
- c) Analysis of historical photographs and paintings - photographs may contain evidence of sites, structures or features (and their context) that no longer exist, and will allow for better understanding of these places.
- d) Analysis of key historical texts and reports - such books and reports may identify known or possible sites, or indicate types of local activities that may assist in the identification of historic places or a more holistic understanding of existing sites.
- e) Analysis of known landscape features and names - street names or suburb names, or formal or familiar locality names can often indicate previous land use, activities or ownership.
- f) Analysis of historical survey maps - early surveyors often noted sites, occupation areas and building outlines. These sites are often noted on survey plans, or in the associated surveyors' fieldbooks. This type of information allows for the opportunity to locate these places and guide decision making.
- g) Development of a specifically targeted and related oral history programme.

## **Authorship**

This report has been produced by Dr John Wilson with input from Sarah Dawson (Boffa Miskell, Christchurch) John Adam (Endangered Gardens), Jane Matthews (Matthews and Matthews Architects), Bruce Petry (Salmond Reed Architects) and Mary O'Keeffe (Heritage Solutions).

This group of consultants has combined to prepare this thematic Contextual Overview for Christchurch City. It is proposed that this document will form a background to the redefinition of the city's heritage inventory of culturally significant buildings and sites.

It is proposed that this document will deliver to the Council a clear and distinctive statement of heritage features unique to the City.

## **Acknowledgements**

Considerable assistance has been provided by others in the preparation of this report – far too many to acknowledge in detail. The consultant team would like to acknowledge the following representatives and groups:

Heritage & Urban Design Unit – Neil Carrie, Miriam Stacy  
Project Steering Group  
The New Zealand Historic Places Trust, Pouhere Taonga.– Pam Wilson also Project Steering Group  
Civic Trust – rep. Ian Clark  
Heritage Trust – rep. Anna Crighton (Christchurch City Council Councillor)  
Department of Conservation – rep. Ian Hill  
Environment Canterbury – rep. Peter Ross  
New Zealand Institute of Architects, Canterbury Branch, rep. Stewart Ross

Council Internal Stakeholders - Environmental Services Unit, Facilities Asset Unit, Central City Revitalization, Area Planning, Strategic Policy Unit, City Plan, Green Space Unit, City Solutions, City Care and Communications

John Dryden, for his knowledge of planning history  
Jenny May, Heritage Consultant

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We are grateful for permission to reproduce photographs and plans from the collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch City Council, Christchurch Public Libraries, New Zealand Archives, Christchurch, and Auckland Public Library.

Particular thanks are due to John Wilson whose contextual historical research resulted in the historical narrative which forms the basis of this document.

## **Background**

Heritage items need to be considered in the context of the history and historical geography of the surrounding area. This contextual history will identify and explain the major factors and processes, expressed as historical themes, that have influenced the history of Christchurch. The study utilises and develops the historical thematic framework produced by the Australian Heritage Commission, with sub-themes particularised to the Christchurch City context. The use of historical themes has been used to draw attention to gaps in existing histories which could lead to an incomplete assessment, study, register or list. This

overview, when used in combination with physical evidence of a place, can suggest areas requiring more detailed historical research.

The development of specific historic themes has been explored with varying success around the world and in New Zealand. The aim of this study was to develop a contextual historical framework in which to focus on the specific nature of Christchurch City, to identify what makes it special, and which markers, places and characteristics can be identified to chart its changing history.

The contextual historical framework has been developed around historic themes distilled from an informed knowledge of Christchurch, based on frameworks developed elsewhere such as Australia and America, but also using models formulated for New Zealand such as the draft New Zealand thematic study by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and those prepared by the Department of Conservation.

The framework and the wider contextual studies were each undertaken in isolation. Once completed, the themes for Christchurch were analysed in group workshops, first by the consultant team and then by the Steering Committee. This work was then presented for initial consultation at a number of sessions (including two public workshops) on August 30 and August 31 2004.

The feedback and comments from this consultation have been incorporated into the current document, and have resulted in refinement of the present themes, which are now presented for Christchurch City Council publication during 2005.

## **Report Structure**

The current document provides a commentary that is to be read in conjunction with the developed Thematic Contextual Overview. It is proposed that this will act as a commentary and discussion to raise issues chapter-by-chapter (by sub-theme). It addresses general points, relevant current listings, areas for possible listing, related bibliographic references and guidance for possible research.

The thematic framework and commentary is not intended to be an exhaustive research document but rather the first part of a potentially multi-staged project, to initiate the on-going and more detailed process for the identification of places of historic significance, reflecting the diverse and distinctive character of Christchurch City, to show what makes it unique in New Zealand and within the Pacific Rim.

The following stage will involve broad public scrutiny of this document and will require further development to achieve an agreed working document. It is proposed that this will be an organic framework that can be added to and developed as information is confirmed and goals revised. This will have particular relevance if it is to remain a dynamic document.

## **Project Scope and Limitations**

This project will be the lead project in the review and updating of the heritage inventory, and is intended to provide a contextual historical framework to inform future projects. It is

intended to provide a broad historical context that will assist identification of items in future projects. No detailed archive research was undertaken, nor was there any detailed research carried out on individual listed protected places or trees.

The historical overview has tried to be inclusive of all cultural values and comprehensively represent the cultural diversity that makes up the current community of Christchurch. It should be noted that a separate project that will focus on Maori heritage and history is planned as part of a Maori heritage overview.

The historical overview has attempted to identify a comprehensive range of tangible and intangible heritage values and items which include built and modified landscapes, places, structures and features, known and potential below and above ground archaeological remains and Maori heritage that are generally 30 years or older.

## **Report Objective & Outcomes**

Christchurch City Council commissioned this multi-disciplinary consultant team to prepare an historical overview of Christchurch and historical thematic framework, to form the basis for a review and future update of the Christchurch City Proposed City Plan heritage inventory.

As part of this project, the consultant team (with the assistance of Christchurch City Council) sought community input in the historical overview initially through Community Development Advisors, Community Boards and a range of key agency and professional stakeholder groups.

The contextual history and historical sub-themes that were developed as part of stage one of the project were then used to review the existing heritage listings, and recommendations made on the updating and expansion of the existing heritage inventory. The recommendations have focussed on identifying gaps (broad item types and specific items as appropriate) and under-represented item types and groups, to ensure a comprehensive range of heritage items including built and landscape items, places and features for the Maori and European and more recent multicultural settlement history of Christchurch and within the context of New Zealand.

The contextual historical overview has been developed using a regional approach, to ensure an holistic contextual understanding of city planning in the surrounding regional context with regard to how the city was settled, has grown and changed in response to city planning initiatives. The history will need to be comprehensive to ensure that heritage items can be identified as part of future projects. There will be a focus on the history of Christchurch city planning, how this has influenced and shaped the city, and the historical and social attachments of the diverse cultural groups that make up the Christchurch community. It will combine various approaches including an historical chronology, national, regional and local historical thematic context and thematic overview to guide broad and site specific identification.

## **Specific tasks are identified as follows:**

- i) Preliminaries and project kickoff meeting. Full Project Team meeting to include review of tasks and confirmation of methodology. Preliminary time-lines and background information exchange;
- ii) Review of background material, including primary and secondary source materials, written records, maps, photographic records and other documents. The research component will commence immediately after arranging a review of initial material, and following receipt of available Council documentation;
- iii) Initial consultation with key stake holders, and initial outline of work confirmed;
- iv) Historical research and preparation of Contextual Historic overview, describing the historical development of Christchurch and including a planning overview within the regional context. We note that a separate project focussed on Maori heritage is planned. This study would provide a preliminary overview, and a context for that study;
- v) Preparation of outline thematic framework and identification of specific research and analysis tasks;
- vi) Review and evaluation of current District Plan listings. Preliminary consideration of potential gaps;
- vii) Meeting with Council's Heritage Division. Preliminary field visit to review current listings and identify potential heritage themes with potential for further investigation. Study of general areas and potential themes, field recording and assessment based on an understanding of the historic development and thematic framework - the intention being to identify elements in the context of the thematic framework, and to identify heritage values and areas that may have been previously overlooked.
- viii) Liaison with Council officers, internal stakeholders and community representatives.
- ix) Preparation of draft reports including maps, photographs (current and historic) and other graphic material to support the heritage analysis and the developed thematic framework.
- xiii) Analysis of District Plan and Historic Places Trust registered items against proposed Christchurch thematic framework;
- x) Develop draft Historic Thematic Frameworks and Sub-Themes as part of project group discussions;
- xi) Summarise and make on site investigation of areas of potential future research and possible scheduling of items;
- xii) Investigate Special Character Areas defined in the district plan for potential development into conservation or heritage defined zones/areas with more detailed and

specific rules related to heritage preservation and enhancement. Make site visits to representative areas that may be potentially fruitful;

xiii) Discuss initial findings with Stakeholders and Steering Group;

xiv) Visit key suburban centres and sites/landscapes to assess group and individual significance.