Charrette Booklet
THE TEAM

The Central City South charrette team represents the joint effort of the offices of DPZ Pacific, Roberts Day Australia and Seth Harry & Associates.

DPZ Pacific organised the charrette and prepared the General and Specific Recommendations and Master Plans during the charrette. The techniques and principles employed by the firm are the body of work developed and copyrighted by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company. These include all supporting diagrams, renderings and vignettes used to illustrate the various components of the Master Plan as presented in this Charrette Booklet except for those prepared by Seth Harry and Associates pertaining to the retail analysis and recommendation for the study area.

Roberts Day Australia facilitated the Charrette Forums, documented participant involvement throughout the 5 day workshop, and published this Charrette Booklet. Specific information gathered is presented in the Appendix.

Seth Harry and Associates prepared the retail analysis and recommendation for the study area during the charrette, as well as all support renderings and vignettes used to illustrate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A substantial effort in collecting background information was undertaken by the Central City Revitalisation Team members Maurice Roers, Miranda Charles and Melanie Williams. The information forms the foundation for the planning and design efforts of the charrette team.

The many participants during the charrette represent a group of progressive thinkers and practitioners in the design of human settlements. Working in collaboration with the local community, stakeholders and professionals, opportunities and constraints were assessed and creative approaches tested for the future development of Central City South.

The charrette involved an open and participatory planning process with extensive input from:

- Christchurch City Council
- Central City Revitalisation Team
- Landowners
- Relevant agencies and stakeholder groups
- Members of the public
- Local residents and adjoining landholders
- Technical specialists

The charrette process has proven very effective for a project as complex as Central City South in that it has fostered a shared understanding of the design issues and allowed all parties to work together to achieve a holistic understanding of the intricacies inherent to community redevelopment. The consultant team wishes to thank all those who took the time to participate with us.
INTRODUCTION
The Christchurch Central City South Planning charrette was convened by the Christchurch City Council under its Central City Revitalisation Project. DPZ Pacific along with Roberts Day Town planning + Design and Seth Harry and Associates undertook the charrette over five days from March 20th to March 24th 2006. A copy of the charrette programme is depicted in Figure 1.

Entitled “Future Directions,” this urban planning and design workshop focused primarily on the Central City south area – contained within the area bounded by Colombo, Lichfield and Madras streets and Moorhouse Ave. Throughout the proceedings the design team was requested by participants to consider the influence of significant business, civic and cultural facilities outside the perimeter of the study area.

Convened in the old Municipal Chambers of Our City the design team had immediate access to the central south neighbourhood and was able to meet with a diverse range of community and business representatives in facilitated forums within Our City and on site throughout the neighbourhood.

Many of the ideas within this study emanated from the array of reports, plans and images assembled by the Central City Revitalization Team of the Christchurch City Council and additional material provided by interested members of the local community. Exploration of a broad range of issues and ideas relating to the locality and a guiding plan for the future of the area were specific objectives of the process.

It was evident at the commencement of the workshop that extensive change is occurring in the central city south locality with increasing levels of residential living, mixed use retail and commercial development. This activity is exemplified by the recent development and investment underway along High and Lichfield streets, including fashion boutiques, fine dining and entertainment in Lichfield Lanes – testament to the potential of the area.

In addition to gleaning much information from meetings convened in Our City the last three days of the charrette involved several of the team members inspecting specific distinct sectors within the study area. These site visits included:

- Prime retail streets – Campbell Ballantyne, John Suckling and Derek Anderson
- Music hub and community interests – Yani Johanson and Lisa Coulter
- City schools – Paul Bradley and Gillian Heald
- Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament – Don Whelan and John Dryden
- CPIT Christchurch Polytech – Grant McPhail, Dean Snelling and Rex Verity

A full list of programme participants is found in the Appendix of this Charrette Document.
INTRODUCTION

CENTRAL CITY SOUTH CHARRETTE

CHARRETTE METHOD

A charrette is the method of planning which DPZ Pacific has adopted and developed in their design and planning practice. The term is derived from the French term for “little cart” and refers to the final intense work effort expended by architects to meet a project deadline. At the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, proctors circulated with little carts to collect final drawings, and students would jump on the “charrette” to put finishing touches on their presentations minutes before the deadline.

The charrette provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers while giving mutual authorship to the plan by all those who participate. During this intensive session, many goals are accomplished: 1) all those influential to the project develop a vested interest in the design and support its vision; 2) the group of design disciplines work in a complementary fashion to produce a set of finished documents that address all aspects of the vision; 3) this collective effort organizes the input of all the players at one meeting and; thereby, eliminates the need for prolonged discussions that typically lengthen the process for conventional planning projects; and 4) a better product is produced more efficiently and more cost effectively because of this collaborative process.

A primary feature of the charrette is that it is specifically organized to encourage the participation of everyone who is interested in the making of a development, whether they represent the interests of the client, the regulators, or the general public. Project data, preliminary development programs, and building/zoning regulations are collected and reviewed. A strategy is developed to include all the regulatory agencies, approving officials, and citizens of the community into the charrette process. The charrette itself commences on or near the project site where architects, planners, engineers, environmental consultants, CAD operators, local public officials, and interested citizens assembled for approximately one week. A team of design experts and consultants set up a full working office, complete with drafting equipment, supplies, computers, copy machines, fax machines and telephones.

An introductory lecture on urban design and planning is given on the first evening of the charrette. The following morning, the team tours the study area. Formal and informal meetings are held with various approving agencies and interest groups. During the charrette, separate tasks and mini-projects are undertaken individually or in small groups. At other times, larger caucuses occur. Often there are simultaneous meetings. Periodically, everyone attends a briefing or presentation. During the charrette, a series of comprehensive technical documents are produced. These documents include rendered plans and perspectives as well as studies and reports.

At the end of the charrette week, the team presents their combined efforts to the public and reviews all of the documents produced during the preceding week.
Great cities have in common an excellent pedestrian environment. The most significant component of such an environment is the streetscape. Collectively the streetscape includes the road bed to the curb, sidewalks and all landscaping and street furniture on them, and the building facades. When designed with the pedestrian in mind the streetscape becomes the outdoor space for the residents of a city.

In areas of cities already developed, such as Central City South, the greatest opportunity for improvement to substandard streetscapes rests with the existing sidewalks. A sidewalk can be broken down into three zones, the curb zone, the pedestrian travel zone, and the building interface zone. The curb zone is the outer edge of the sidewalk next to the road bed, and accommodates streetscape amenities and infrastructure. The pedestrian travel zone is centred on the sidewalk and must provide a clear path of travel. The building interface zone lies adjacent to the property line providing access to buildings and can accommodate additional streetscape amenities.

There are numerous elements that make up a streetscape, but they can be organized into four categories; paving, plantings, lighting, and furniture. These elements vary in relation to the surrounding densities and uses. In Central City South, a high density neighbourhood is envisioned offering both residential and commercial uses along a variety of streetscapes. Some will be pedestrian only and built a new, while others will occur along the existing street network.

Paving is the most visible streetscape element. Selecting a paving material must take climate and maintenance into account. Cold and wet climates such as Christchurch should select materials that can expand and contract and which provide traction. Concrete and asphalt are economical materials and when combined with special materials or coloured dyes it can provide visual clues to changing street character.

Plantings typically have higher cost and maintenance requirements because unlike other elements in the streetscape, they change over time. The costs, however, are outweighed by the quality of life which good landscaping provides a community. As with paving material, landscape selection should take into account local climate and surrounding uses and density. Trees are the most visible landscape element. Trees in high density residential areas along pedestrian lanes and alleys should be planted in individual planters with water permeable material, such as metal grates, brick pavers, and crushed stone, or in containers. If underground utilities are not present tree selection should aim to provide a moderate tree canopy. In commercial areas, along streets, trees should also be planted in individual planters or containers. Their selection should be based on their ability to limb up with lighter and higher above the ground floor signage to prevent blocking advertising and shopfronts. Because buildings may have awnings and verandas it may be necessary to plant trees between on street parking spaces.

Planted beds in the ground or raised should be used primarily in residential areas. Hanging planters, attached to light poles and buildings are appropriate for commercial areas.

Lighting serves both to illuminate the way for motorists and pedestrians as well as deterring crime. Lighting can also be used to as a design feature to accent building facades and illuminate outdoor advertising. The amount of lighting is also determined by the surrounding densities and uses. The light intensity should range from .2 lux (lumens per square meter) for sidewalks and lanes in residential areas, 1.0 lux for commercial areas and parking, to 5.0 lux at building entrances.

Lighting is classified in three categories; roadway lighting, sidewalk lighting, and ancillary lighting. Roadway lighting for important streets should be ornamental to establish a theme for the neighbourhood. The lighting should be mounted on poles that do not exceed 8.5 meters in height. Their placement should be along the curb zone, between street trees. The average distance between a street tree and light pole should be no more than 12 meters. Such poles should also have a pedestrian-scaled version, between 4 and 5 meters in height that can be used for pedestrian passages, plazas, and squares. For rear lanes and alleys, where space is tight, overhead lighting strung along wires anchored to building facades is recommended. The colour of the light is important. The best light is a white light such as metal halide, fluorescent, and compact fluorescent.

Furniture in a streetscape provides scale and functionality. Types of street furniture include, benches, tables and chairs, trash cans, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, bollards, kiosks, transit shelters, signage, parking meters, and newspaper stands. Their placement is within the curb zone and building façade zone. Near intersections a clear zone of 3.5 meters is necessary where pedestrians wait to cross streets. A clear area should also be established at building entrances.

Benches should be located in high use high pedestrian area. In a curb zone they should face the building façade or the street. If in the building façade zone they should face the street. In no instance should benches be placed in front of shop windows. Trash cans should be placed at frequent intervals and only within the curb zone. Private trash cans can be places at building entrances along the building zone. Bike racks should be placed along the edges of plazas, squares and other open spaces. Newspaper stands should be installed as large scale, single racks, with multiple containers. Such stands may be combined with utility boxes in certain instances. Bollards can be steal or concrete and should only be used to prevent automobile traffic from encroaching in pedestrian zones. They are always located along the curb zone. Kiosks provide information about community events, neighbourhood maps, public phones, drinking fountains, and advertising. The width of a sidewalk is critical to whether or not a kiosk will become an amenity or obstacle. Non-advertising signage is always located in the curb zone and can come in a variety of styles, colours, and materials.
NEIGHBOURHOOD RETAIL
(See: Neighbourhood Shopping, Ten Strategies; Urban Land, January 2005)

The focus for any retail revitalization efforts in existing urban neighbourhoods is the street network. Great streets encourage and support thriving retail. To insure great streets a combination of design elements and political issues must exist and be actively promoted by the community. The design elements and political issues can be summarized by ten principles.

1- **Select a local champion.** A champion can be a group, such as a business improvement district (BID), or corporation or partnership of businesses, a community development group, or a neighbourhood anchor, such as the CPIT. An individual can be a resident, elected official, property owner, or city staff person. The champion should pull together a core group of stakeholders to form a public/private partnership to guide the redevelopment efforts. The stakeholders must be in it for the long term, so the members, if political should be ready to stay on board even if they lose an election or choose not to run. The champion must also develop a process or mechanism for resolving conflicts among the stakeholders.

2- **Establish one vision.** It is important to not let the redevelopment efforts by “hijacked” by any one group or individual. Bring all agendas into the open. Create momentum by assigning each stakeholder a specific role. Make sure the vision aims to serve and enhance the neighbourhood as much as the greater community. Serving the greater community is important but should not be the main goal at the expense of supporting a sustainable immediate neighbourhood. To help carry out the vision it may be necessary to hire a leasing professional to coordinate management and recruitment of tenants.

3- **Develop residential.** Increase homeownership to stabilize the neighbourhood and create more stakeholders and customers within walking distance. Residential creates a customer base for retail, such as grocery stores and markets. It also encourages mix use development which supports longer business hours. It also can provide for affordable housing opportunities which attract workers who can live near to employment.

4- **Give priority to the pedestrian.** Accommodating traffic is only one of many goals for successful neighbourhood retail. One way streets hinder successful retail. Encourage multiple entrances to shops. Locate and designate areas targeted for retailing. Often streets are too long to support retail along their entire length. Some area should be allowed to have offices on the ground floor. Sidewalks should be uncluttered with a clear route of passage for walking. Lighting should be bright enough to ensure security. White lighting renders more realistic colors and a more inviting feeling for pedestrians.

5- **Parking.** Size needs realistically. Urban shopping requires fewer spaces than suburban centres. Parking requirements will change over time. Initial requirements may be higher for the overall neighbourhood until residential population numbers pick up and improved transit service offers alternatives to the car. For metered spaces time limits should be fairly enforced so that turnover occurs, but not so regulated that people end up shopping elsewhere. As densities increase parking decks above and below buildings should be implemented. Bicycle parking is a growing part of the urban lifestyle. This is especially true in college neighbourhoods.

6- **Merchandise and lease proactively.** Establish a quasi-public retail leasing and management agency to plan and coordinate the neighbourhoods leasing strategy, actively recruit tenants and direct them to appropriate landlords and property owners so that leasing deals can be made privately. The more control the agency has the quicker the neighbourhood will become a thriving retail destination. A first priority of the agency should be to hire a management professional to direct its activities. Begin the program along three or four blocks that have the greatest potential to create a successful nucleus to build on.

7- **Be proactive.** Set up design guidelines and development standards to make sure new development and façade improvements are compatible with the vision. Such standards can control not only aesthetics but also concerns such as the types of stores and their operating hours. To solicit interest in redeveloping key properties target requests for proposals.

8- **Safety.** The public perception of a street’s safety has a tremendous impact on its use. Active streets with a mix of uses promote surveillance which deters crime. Areas that have nightclubs and bars have the potential to both deter and instigate crime. Hours of operation and sale of alcohol need to be regulated to reduce rowdy after hours behaviour. Police on foot and bike patrol have been shown to be an affective crime deterrent.

9- **Develop 24 hour activity.** Density and mix of uses are what extend shopping hours and foster active urban neighbourhoods. Diverse retailers help to create cross shopping opportunities. Office users support daytime demand, especially professional tenants such as doctors and lawyers because the attract steady visitors, employ office staff, and serve neighbourhood residents. Civic, cultural and entertainment anchors attract a high number of visitors and creates a park once and walk environment for shoppers.

10- **Manage for change.** Neighbourhood retail grows and changes over time. Make sure to adjust the tenant mix as retail and neighbourhood needs change. It is not uncommon for shopping centres to remove up to 10% of their tenants every year to remain competitive and cutting edge. To insure that problems do not go unchecked there should be an ongoing conflict resolution process amoung the stakeholders. At the broader level, representatives of the business community and citizen leaders should develop long term relationships with public sector representatives to insure the needs of the neighbourhood are paid attention to.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is the complete list of twenty-two action items described in detail under the General and Specific Recommendations of the Central City South Charrette Booklet. The items are grouped into short, mid and long term time frames to prioritize the workshop conclusions. The list indicates possible directions that the Christchurch City Council could take to provide a coordinated revitalization effort. When confirmed these actions should be included in a Council report that directs future Council efforts in Central City South.

SHORT TERM ACTION
- Remove or reduce development contributions for Central City properties
- Redevelop City Mall, introduce a ‘Garden in the City’ theme to City Mall
- Redevelop the Council-owned car park to a mixed-use development
- Increase lighting to improve safety
- Develop and implement area-wide Storm Water Management Plans
- Establish an internal system of lanes and mews around which mixed-use redevelopment occurs
- Implement a unified parking management system
- Retain a Project Manager to oversee redevelopment in the study area
- Encourage high density residential development at the mid-block

MID TERM ACTION
- Develop a Jade Stadium, Catholic Cathedral, Jade Stadium, High Street corridor
- Utilize Rugby World Cup 2011 as a driver for redevelopment and reconnection to greater Christchurch
- Remove the system of one-way streets
- Incorporate structured parking into new developments
- Strengthen and develop the existing string of retail which leverages the three types (City Mall, niche retailers, and regional-big box) already found in the study area
- Offer rates remissions or graduated system for projects based on scale and use of services
- Tax credits for projects that reuse heritage buildings
- Creation of a redevelopment agency with statutory override
- Attract brand name retailers to City Mall

LONG TERM ACTION
- Develop an inter-modal transit station at the site of the former rail station
- Expand the tram network to create a viable Central City transit network
- Construction of a second Bus Exchange north of the square
- Develop ethnic precincts to concentrate cultural and civic amenities
MEWS, LANE & ALLEYS

Based on the existing redevelopment of Lichfield, Ash and Poplar the design team believes the point of difference for Central City South is its rear lanes and alleys. To encourage the continuation of this a coordinated vision for an extensive system of predominantly pedestrian rights of way (ROW) are recommended. These will comprise a loop, which will ultimately extend from the Cathedral Square down through to Lichfield and onto Tuam and St Asaph, Welles, Dundas, looping back up through to Tuam on the east side of Manchester, via Eaton, Allen, Southwark and St. Asaph. The system would continue on to Cashel and Worchester.

The system would offer a variety of urban environments catering to a broad demographic. Mews and lanes would be predominantly residential, with some limited commercial opportunities such as consultancies, small home office uses, and boutique hotels and bed and breakfasts allowed along lanes. Alleys would provide the commercial-entertainment-retail environment with accommodation and some residential opportunities. Paving materials, lighting and street furniture (if warranted) would be selected to reinforce the predominant use. Windows, doors, and shopfronts would activate the public space and serve as a deterrent to crime. At strategic intervals the mews, lanes and alleys would open to a public open space, which could take the form of a pocket park for residential areas or an open plaza for commercial areas. These would allow for a variety of uses and can be programmed by the adjoining user. Pocket parks could be designed as quite contemplative spaces for sitting, reading, or walking a pet. Plazas can be designed to offer outdoor seating for restaurants, overflow parking during the day, markets for produce and art or for outdoor performance.

At strategic intervals along the routing of the pedestrian system developments offering regional destination opportunities would serve to anchor the neighbourhood and draw the tourist, visitor, and local market into and through the study area (See COUNCIL PROPERTIES). These would cater to the Christchurch region and can include cinemas, large format retail, and performance halls for a variety of cultural groups, such as symphonies, ballet companies and theatre groups, both professional and from academic institutions such as the CPIT. If enough such organisations exist, the focal points along the system could be co-anchored by culturally oriented activities.

Each scale of redevelopment, from the small and medium private sector infill along the mews, lanes and alleys to the large scale projects, which could be joint venture developments between the public and private sectors, would offer opportunity to address: laneway character, tenure, widths, landscaping, lighting, parking, length, storm water retention and water quality requirements in a coordinated manner.

This work should be the subject of an independent study modelled on the East Perth Redevelopment Authority’s [EPRA in Western Australia Small Streets] project.
MAIN ROADS & CIVIC SPACES

Colombo, High, Manchester and St Asaph streets represent a significant amount of public frontage in need of design and merchandising coordination (see MERCHANDISING). Each requires various degrees of intervention. Colombo, the main retail street entering the centre city, suffers from its designation as a main bus route and the lack of residential population within walking distance. The detailing of the streetscape highlights the fact that buses are given priority. The bus lanes and waiting people discourage a lively shopping environment to the detriment of businesses along the street. While buses are a viable form of public transit, buses and bus routes do not necessarily encourage shopping. Bus routes are not fixed permanently and are difficult to shop from. This is in comparison to other forms of transit such as trolleys. Being fixed, a trolley will guarantee service and therefore spur investment along the lines. It is also a means of transport that is very conducive to window-shopping.

POLYTECHNIC-CATHEDRAL-STADIUM

Members of the design team met with CPIT – Christchurch Polytech representatives and inspected the campus. The representatives of the Polytech tabled the 1997 Directional Plan For Campus Development and Campus Development Principles, which contains the following specific recommendations:

- The creation of diagonal pedestrian spine through the campus from the intersection on High and St Asaph St through to the Cathedral (CBS).
- Reinforce the identity and status of the CPIT as an important urban institution
- Emphasise the outward links between the CPIT and the city
- Establish or maintain strong links with High St, the south-east inner district, and the wider city beyond
- Create appropriate parameters for the City Campus
- Preserve the vista of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament

CPIT is also keen to investigate future options for the future development of the extensive car parking area owned and leased by the institution.

The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament (CBS)

CBS is regarded as one of the finest examples of church architecture in Australasia. The chapel adjacent to the cathedral is the venue for the Christchurch School of Music. The site also contains a Catholic high school campus. A matter of concern to CBS and the School of Music is the adverse impact of the one way traffic movement along Barbadoes St, which severely impacts on performances within the chapel and CBS and the Music Centre have formed the Barbadoes St Cultural Zone Development Group to evaluate:

- Acoustic impacts [and alleviation] of traffic on cathedral and chapel practice rooms
- Active exploration of alternative traffic routing possibilities
- Visionary sketches of possible precinct development
- Exploration of institutions sharing resources courses and promotion
- Study of the best possible residential/commercial/institutional mix for the area
- Promoting attractions, festivals, open days on the site.

CBS is prepared to consider the creation of a piazza and pedestrian promenade between Barbadoes St and the bus depot on the corner of Fitzgerald St and Moorhouse Ave.
COUNCIL PROPERTY

One of the largest blocks of space available for large scale redevelopment is the Christchurch City Council's property, which includes the City Offices building. Consisting mostly of an at grade parking lot, the property would create a focus of regional draw for the City as well as a centre along the proposed Alley, Lane and Muse system.

The property provides enough space to showcase multiple uses in a high-density environment, as well as the opportunity to renovate and or incorporate two existing buildings. The Council Offices once housed a ground floor department store. Reintroducing a lively retail scene is important to the plan. The upper floors could accommodate housing and/or office space. The tall floor to ceiling heights and large windows make the building a strong candidate for residential conversion. If feasible, any residential should be located on the top floors if a mix of office is also included.

The Odeon Theatre offers an excellent venue for performing arts. If it were to be incorporated into a larger complex of structures, the cultural component would add a unique mix. We recommend a series of uses that transition from the Alley, Lane and Muse system to the Main Streets and Civic Space system. The complex should wrap around a core-parking garage and could include a multiplex cinema, restaurants, retail and housing.
BUS EXCHANGE

The current size of the Bus Exchange site and ingress and egress conflicts largely attributable to the one way traffic flows on Litchfield St presents problems for the continued expansion of the transit system. It is understood that by 2008 the facility will no longer be able to efficiently and reliably accommodate the required number of buses to maintain planned service. By centralising bus transfers in one location, the overall system suffers if the facility becomes congested.

In addition to the service issues, the Bus Exchange itself negatively impacts the surrounding streets and businesses. Waiting riders present an obstacle along Colombo Street to retail tenants. The crowds make shopping difficult. The bus queues, their size and speed make sidewalk activity unpleasant along Lichfield Street. The overall traffic and congestion effectively cuts off the Central City area and Avon River from the Central City South.

It is recommended that the operations and viability to expanding the existing Bus Exchange be investigated. It may be prudent to construct an additional exchange to complement and assist in reducing conflicts at the existing facility. An additional exchange location may also permit future multi-modal access, such as the old train station at Moorhouse Street. A new bus exchange location may also be investigated north of Cathedral Square in order to disperse bus traffic and create a system with redundancy to insure reliable and efficient service.

The existing Bus Exchange can be redeveloped with more school uses, similar to the one now located on its roof. With a retail ground floor and a two-way Lichfield St pedestrian activity would be drawn from Colombo and the Avon River into the Central City South.
PRESERVING HERITAGE

Observation: While the total stock of listed heritage structures account for approximately 20% of the building inventory within the study area it is these buildings which provide the base to draw in new growth and set the tone and character for the revitalisation of the neighbourhood.

Discussion: The existing range of heritage buildings represents one of the largest stocks in New Zealand. 300 such assets have been listed in the Central City. There are also many non-listed heritage buildings worthy of retention that add substantial character. The Design Team started every meeting with a discussion on how to encourage the preservation and reuse of this very important asset. It was agreed that the heritage buildings would provide the point of difference around which a vision could be established for the redevelopment of the study area into a dynamic and populated urban neighbourhood.

The designs and techniques necessary to encourage a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment are well understood as are their application through planning and zoning processes. These are documented throughout this charrette booklet. Current City Plan regulations allow for a wide variety of uses with the only major restrictions being floor area ratio and simple height and setback provisions depending on location. To make the development process easier, participants did voice the need for more facilitative building consent “experience” within the City (see Processes). However, there are often additional factors which influence the ability of the market to respond to a demand for such lifestyle choices which go beyond just regulation. All who participated expressed concern that “barriers” to redevelopment of the heritage stock in particular, as well as barriers to redevelopment of empty lots were to blame for the current condition of the neighbourhood. The market response to the reuse and redevelopment of heritage structures in the study area is currently inchoate and additional discussions to determine a reason for this was undertaken.

An obvious constraint could be the depth of the market. A general rule of thumb states that between 2 and 3 percent of a metropolitan population will purchase high density central city residential product if such product were available in pedestrian vibrant neighbourhoods. With a population of approximately 400,000, Christchurch has a pent up demand for at least 8,000 potential residents who would prefer the specific housing types envisioned for the study area. These include lofts, live-works, and apartments if provided within an excellent urban setting. This is a sufficient number to warrant new construction at a scale greater than what has occurred to date.

Given what some view as laissez-faire zoning and City Plan rules, the slow pace of growth for the area must be attributed to other factors or “barriers”. During the two days of meetings the participants expressed some common concerns. The cost of seismic strengthening of masonry structures was agreed by most participants to be a significant impediment to reuse, as is the impact of many of the other requirements of the Building Act such as disabled access and fire upgrading, which are written with new construction in mind. This was especially the case when additional costs imposed during the resource consent process were added on. Some of these “code compliance costs” are triggered by a change of use, for example from commercial to residential, while others are specific infrastructure and reserve levies and fees imposed on development. A macro scale concern also voiced was the current rating system for the City that was felt to be overly biased in favour of suburban property owners. The low rates paid by suburban residents in relation to residents of other New Zealand cities was believed by some to not generate sufficient revenue for upkeep in the more highly trafficked city centre area.

The fees and levies imposed on development as “contributions”, and those when a change of use is sought, coupled with the cost of seismic strengthening, essentially serve to stifle the ability of the market to respond to a “pent-up-demand” for inner city living. The evidence for such demand can be seen in the quick take-up of those few heritage residential units, which have already been brought to market. Reserve contributions and other development levies estimated by participants at anywhere within the range of $20,000 to $30,000 per residential unit. The impact on affordable housing is immediate, as the levies demand more expensive units to be developed.

Earthquake strengthening is a central government mandate requiring the City to comply with its provisions. During the discussion it was agreed that while the Council has been accommodating to applicants in terms of time allowances to bring buildings up to current code and the establishment of grant opportunities. However, these are arbitrary and time intensive enough to make them sufficiently unpredictable to discourage broad investment.
**PRESERVING THE HERITAGE**

Recommendation: In order to remove the “barriers” discouraging the redevelopment of heritage structures the Design Team recommends that 1- Disincentives in the form of development levies and contributions be removed, 2- Depending on the size of a project and its use that rates remissions be offered, 3- New contributions not be tailored as a “one-size-fits-all” policy, 4- That the City investigate a rate based on a formula, which takes into account the value and community use differences between urban and suburban neighbourhoods, 5- other financing methods, such as tax credits, for projects, which reuse heritage listed buildings, and 6- and the creation of a statutory body with planning and development powers, staffed independently from existing planning and zoning. By applying these recommendations a market oriented framework for preserving not only individual buildings but also clusters of significant buildings (as previously designated Character Groups in the 2004 City Plan but now deleted) can become the primary motivation for protecting heritage buildings and fabric.

1- Levies should only be applicable where additional floor area is being developed or property is being subdivided. They should not be applied to restoration of heritage buildings unless additional floor area or on additional unit title is being created. Removal of residential development contributions was cited as the most important step toward encouraging new residential projects in the central city - both due to the amount and the upfront nature of the cost. Given that development in the subject area would be taking place in an environment with already well developed infrastructure with spare capacity and that the reuse of this historically substantial investment represents a reaffirmation of past contributions it seems short-sidé to view new residential development as a means to collect short-term revenue. The loss of long-term revenue in terms of rates and expenditure generated through businesses in the centre city and future rate collection increases from currently empty buildings brought back to active use, together with a substantially expanded rates base from the addition of 15-20,000 homes in the Central City, would more than compensate for any loss of a one-time development contribution. Additional economic benefits would flow from the multiplier effect of substantial capital investment in new inner city residential projects.

2- Varied uses should be treated differently in the consideration of rates remissions. Residential, commercial and retail generate different economic realities for tenants. In the early stages of neighbourhood revitalisation the “pioneers” take on substantial risk, (from the developers who build and remodel heritage buildings to the tenants who lease or rent space in them). The only effective method of encouraging developers to take on the substantial capital investment and market development risks inherent with residential development in the centre City and enticing enough people to take-up space in untested neighbourhoods is by reducing the financial burden. Reducing the burden would have an immediate two-fold effect. First, it would kick-start some pioneer projects which would stimulate interest and develop a market and secondly it would reduce the overall price-point of units and enable a variety of housing types catering to a broad range of income and age group. New areas require substantial commitments by possible tenants in terms of fitting out space (residential, retail or commercial) and attracting new customers. Rates remissions calibrated to the use and size of tenant may also encourage business and residential relocation to heritage buildings.

3- The City should study the proposed new storm-water management regime contemplated by ECAN in order to select a system of creative solutions to address the conflict between the quite different developed characteristics of inner city infill and suburban greenfield. The burden of compliance should not be made to rest solely on the individual landowner and developer. By passing off responsibility the City will guarantee compliance through the application of the easiest and least responsive systems available. The City’s apparent, preferred solution of individual storm water mitigation lot by lot comes with associated costs and requires ongoing maintenance expertise. It should be noted that a majority of the solutions are weighted towards greenfield conditions (On-Site Stormwater Management Guidelines, October 2004). For those with the financial means to engage in resource consent within the study area, the need to balance financial risk will dictate designs that discourage urban, pedestrian friendly, developments. This is because greenfield conditions do not support such designs. In order to develop an urban response to the new regulations, developers will have to spend significant sums to come up with urban based solutions on their own. These costs will be passed on to the consumer which in the beginning of any redevelopment process, will leave only a small percentage of the potential population with the opportunity to move into the neighbourhood.

Best practices would dictate that Storm Water Management Catchment Area Plans be developed, which measure impacts at specific discharge points and calibrate the measurements to take into account the differing built up conditions of the catchment area in question. By doing so a system of City wide reserves can be identified and set aside, forming a series of open space facilities located in proximity to the water body of final discharge. Such facilities in the form of lakes and parks adjacent to important water sources create additional recreational space for the City. These would become amenities in keeping with the Garden City reputation of Christchurch. By facilitating a framework for complying with ECAN’s requirements, the individual landowner and developer can more reasonably be asked to assist in the effort to insure future water quality. The costs of storm water management should be staged so that they can be offset by new development as it occurs, (see PARKING). The incorporation of specific, on-site storm water management devices that reduce sediment and contaminant discharge should be credited back to the landowner/developer.

Further study into the financial methods to incentivise an urban solution to storm water management needs to be carried out.

4- The City should carefully research whether its current rating differentials match national averages for a population base of similar size. While this would be politically controversial, the results, if they show that a bias does exist towards suburban development, may help to align the City’s expressed desire to develop a dense and sustainable urban pattern (as documented by the Central City Forum and Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy). Allocation of rate revenues should also be studied to determine if a more equitable distribution of funds to areas of the City heavily used by all residents and which may generate more than its fair share of revenues into the rating pool. The suburban bias purported to exist within the rating system would discourage re-use and investment in the more dense and difficult to develop areas of the City. Knowing if this is true would help to guide policy better.

5- Tax credits for developments which use and revitalize listed heritage stock should be considered. This is one of the easiest and quickest methods of incentivising the preservation of these important assets.

6- The creation of a redevelopment authority to oversee the revitalization effort should be undertaken. Because of the unique nature of the Central City South neighbourhood it is important to set aside staff and resources that can assist the private sector with consents and construction. The risks and resources that will need to be expended to revitalize a very important sector of the City need to be reciprocated by Council in the form of a statutory body that invites such expenditure from the private sector. All too often the expressed goals for redeveloping an area of a city are not supported by a mechanism for those aspiring to do so. A redevelopment authority provides the bridge and confidence necessary for the private sector to make the investments in time and money. Examples of such redevelopment authorities exist around the world. In Perth the East Subiaco Redevelopment Authority oversaw the development of a neighbourhood similar to Central City South.
NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIONS

Observation: While time and funding issues have determined the limits of the current study area, it is acknowledged by all participants that planning should take into account more logical boundaries. The area immediately surrounding the study area readily lends itself to extension north and east.

Discussion: The Polytechnic (CPIT) borders the study area along Madras Street to the east. The campus generates a significant student presence in Central Christchurch (estimated at 50,000 students each week), which can be witnessed by the growing number of retail and commercial establishments catering to their needs. Live music venues, books, and music stores do a thriving business drawing people from throughout Christchurch to the centre city.

The potential beneficial impact of the CPIT is however, substantially diminished by the urban environment in which it sits. While strategically located, the integration of the campus buildings with the surrounding neighbourhood represents a hybrid between an urban and suburban campus. Fortunately there is enough space within the campus to provide infill opportunities going forward that can leverage the reconfiguration of the one way streets that form the boundary along some of the schools property. By turning the campus outward looking and urban, the redevelopment of the adjacent properties and the longer term goal of creating a developed pedestrian friendly corridor to Jade Stadium becomes possible. Current zoning requirements for on-site parking help to solidify the suburban character of the campus as does the original intent of the campus plan. From the early 1970’s up until the first part of the 1990’s campus planning around the world focused on suburban inward looking plans. CPIT’s design helped to support the one way system for Madras Street. One-way streets are designed to move traffic quickly through an area. The higher speeds increase noise and make using the adjoining sidewalks unpleasant. Reacting to the unpleasant conditions most buildings will pull back from the street and present parking or landscaped buffers to mitigate the noise. As a result, pedestrian activity is greatly reduced. Madras Street has become a boundary through traffic management (see Traffic and Transit). It has also discouraged the idea of redeveloping the empty spaces within the campus.

The study area is limited in its pedestrian connectivity to the heart of Christchurch to the north. Cathedral Square and the commercial employment hub immediately surrounding it and the Worcester Street connection to the Avon River park are tenuously tied to the study area by Cashel Mall. The layout of the Mall effectively turns pedestrians away from the study area and back to Colombo and Cathedral Square. The Bus Exchange along Lichfield at Colombo Street serves as a second boundary to pedestrian movement from the Avon River into the study area. The frequency of bus traffic along with the noise and crowds generated by waiting and transferring riders prevents vibrant street activity from taking hold.

In discussions, participants brought up the fact that a majority of the pedestrian traffic in terms of tourists and local residents did not find its way to the study area. The exception was the student population., which uses the High Street corridor and Cashel Mall connection to access the CPIT. The area had a low visibility in people’s minds.

The issue of the neighbourhood’s visibility as a destination is part of what has determined the study area to begin with. CPIT to the east and Cathedral Square to the north are recognisable parts of the City’s fabric, which effectively screen the study area from the City. The one-way street system and “malling” of Cashel Street, along with the location of the Bus Exchange serve as barriers to pedestrians from the active heart of Christchurch. Moorhouse Avenue to the south coupled with the rail lines terminates the connection of the neighbourhood to the southern part of the City.

Discussions with officers of Council’s City Streets Unit revealed that Fitzgerald Street could be turned into the city bypass, enabling Madras to be converted into a two-way street with little impact to the current cross town traffic distribution and volume.

Recommendation: Strong connections to adjoining neighbourhoods should be initiated by the City Council. Three important projects worthy of future planning charrettes are: 1- the redevelopment of Cashel Street Mall-Bus Exchange-Cathedral Square area, 2- the Jade Stadium-Cathedral-CPIT-High Street corridor and 3- a Moorhouse Avenue intermodal station and Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

The Design Team proposes that Cashel Street Mall and Cathedral Square be re-examined based on the expressed initiatives of City Council to redevelop the centre City. Specifically, at a minimum, Cashel Street should be re-opened to automobile use. The remaining segments of the pedestrian mall should be re-designed to more accurately reflect the “Garden City” character of Christchurch. In doing so, the emphasis should be on an urban version of the Avon River Park which the current mall ties into. A formal landscape plan and upgraded store facades would encourage pedestrian use through to High Street. The relocation of the Bus Exchange to another site, such as a multi-modal station at Moorhouse Avenue, would permit easier penetration into the study area from Colombo and the Avon River. If the Bus Exchange cannot be moved than the Design Team recommends a dramatic reduction in transfer stops to reduce the impact of existing bus traffic. The reduction should be coordinated with the opening of a second facility to service the centre city. The first recommendation as to the location of a second facility would be a Moorhouse multi-modal exchange, followed by a location to the north of Worcester Street.

This would benefit the City as a whole and accrue immediate positive impacts on Central City South. It is the case that a concentration of transportation related infrastructure and, or a reliance on a single transportation asset do create inefficiencies and negative externalities. Continuing to expand the Bus Exchange will only succeed in creating congestion in the immediate area, thus handicapping the bus systems ability to provide on-time service throughout the City. It will also make it less likely that any redevelopment of the surrounding properties will occur because of the traffic, crowds, noise and pollution generated by the buses and those waiting to transfer.

The Jade Stadium to High Street axis is a historically strong connection that has been eroded over the years. The possibility of the 2011 World Cup coming to New Zealand should set the planning time frame for reactivating a pedestrian, vehicular, and open space network that stitches together the study area with these important community assets. In doing so the CPIT would become a strong anchor and access point for the study area. The redevelopment of the campus would require infill development and demolition to facilitate clear connections through.

Because of the existing infrastructure and location of the previous rail station in relation to Christchurch as a whole it is logical that efforts be made to re-establish and expand the site into a multi-modal transit station. In doing so Manchester Street could once again become an entry point into the Central City South neighbourhood and a connection back to the greater Christchurch area. Because the Design Team has selected Manchester Street and St. Asaph Street as the centre of the neighbourhood, anchoring the southern end of the study area with a multi-modal station would draw pedestrian activity and related commercial retail from High Street down to the station helping to redevelop the existing corridor. Here to, as with the Bus Exchange proposal, the benefits would accrue to Christchurch as a whole as well as Central City South.
A pedestrian shed is measured by a five minute walking radius from the edge to the centre. The area delineated by the five minute walk serves to demarcate a neighbourhood unit. Using this increment for planning it is possible to provide for sustainable, pedestrian-oriented development.
NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIONS

Discussion: The Polytechnic (CPIT) borders the study area along Madras Street to the east. The campus generates a significant student presence in Central Christchurch (estimated at 50,000 students each week) which can be witnessed by the growing number of retail and commercial establishments catering to their needs. Live music venues, books and music stores do a thriving business, drawing people from throughout Christchurch to the central city.

The potential beneficial impact of the CPIT is however, substantially mitigated by the urban environment in which it sits. While strategically located, the integration of the campus buildings with the surrounding neighbourhood represents a hybrid between an urban and suburban campus. Zoning requirements for on-site parking help to solidify this character, but the main reasons for the lack of integration and much of the subsequent suburban look to the buildings and streetscape are due to Madras Street being a one-way street. One-way streets are designed to move traffic quickly through an area. The higher speeds increase noise and make using the adjoining sidewalks unpleasant. Reacting to the unpleasant conditions most buildings will pull back from the street and present parking or landscaped buffers to mitigate the noise. As a result pedestrian activity is greatly reduced. Madras has become a boundary through traffic management (see Traffic and Transit).

The study area is limited in its pedestrian connectivity to the north which is the heart of Christchurch. Cathedral Square and the commercial employment hub immediately surrounding it and the Worcester Street connection to the Avon River park are tenuously tied to the study area by Cashel Mall which continues as High Street. The layout of the Mall effectively turns pedestrians away from the study area and back to Colombo Street and Cathedral Square. The Bus Exchange along Lichfield Street at Colombo Street serves as a boundary to pedestrian movement from the Avon River to the study area. The frequency of bus traffic along with the noise and crowds generated by waiting and transferring riders prevents vibrant street activity from taking hold.

In discussions, participants brought up the fact that a majority of the pedestrian traffic in terms of tourists and local residents did not find its way to the study area. The exception was the student population which uses the High Street corridor and Cashel Mall connection to access the CPIT. The area had a low visibility in people’s minds.

The issue of the neighbourhood’s visibility as a destination is part of what has determined the study area to begin with. The CPIT to the east and Cathedral Square to the north are recognisable parts of the City’s fabric which effectively screen the study area from the City. The one-way street system and “malling” of Cashel Street, along with the location of the Bus Exchange serve as barriers to pedestrians from the active heart of Christchurch. Moorhouse Avenue to the south coupled with the rail lines terminates the connection of the neighbourhood to the southern part of the City.

Discussions with officers of Council’s City Streets Unit revealed that Fitzgerald Street could be turned into the city bypass, enabling Madras to be converted into a two-way street with little impact to the current cross town traffic distribution and volume.
NEIGHBOURHOOD BOUNDARY

Recommendation: Strong connections to adjoining neighbourhoods should be initiated by the City Council. Three important projects worthy of future planning charrettes are: 1- the redevelopment/planning and positioning of Cashel Street Mall-Bus Exchange-Cathedral Square, 2- the Jade Stadium-Cathedral-CPIT-High Street Corridor master plan and 3- a Moorhouse Avenue intermodal station serving rail, bus and trolley.

The Design Team proposes that Cashel Street Mall and Cathedral Square be re-examined based on the expressed initiatives of City Council to redevelop the Central City. Specifically at a minimum Cashel Street to Colombo should be re-opened to automobile use. The remaining segments of pedestrian mall should be re-designed to more accurately reflect the “Garden City” character of Christchurch. In doing so, the emphasis should be on an urban version of the Avon River Park to which the mall ties into. A formal landscape plan and upgraded store facades would encourage pedestrian use through to High Street. The relocation of the expanded Bus Exchange to another site, such as a multi-modal station at Moorhouse Avenue, would permit easier penetration into the study area from Colombo Street and the Avon River. If the Bus Exchange cannot be moved than the Design Team recommends a dramatic reduction in transfer stops to reduce the impact of existing bus traffic. The reduction should be coordinated with the opening of a second facility to service the Central City. The first recommendation as to the location of a second facility would be the Moorhouse multi-modal exchange followed by a location to the north of Worcester Street.

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Because of the existing infrastructure and central location of the previous rail station in relation to Christchurch, it is logical that efforts be made to re-establish and expand the site into a multi-modal transit station. In so doing, Manchester Street could once again become an entry into the study area. Because the Design Team has selected Manchester Street and St Asaph Street as the centre of the neighbourhood, anchoring the southern end of the study area with a multi-modal station would draw pedestrian activity and related commercial retail from High Street down to the station helping to redevelop the existing corridor.
STREETScape

Observation: The current streetscapes present a chaotic and tired façade to the public realm of the neighbourhood.

Discussion: The elegant historical face of Christchurch is under pressure from redevelopment. Modern interventions in terms of signage, verandas and building construction have eroded the formality of the public realm. The selection of various street furniture styles which often clash adds to the visual discord.

The neighbourhood has historically been the location for industry and business. Today these underlying uses are susceptible to contemporary views on what the look of such businesses should be. Without a coherent vision for the study area, the neighbourhood will continue to struggle between the opposing character traits of historical elegance and contemporary cutting edge grittiness applied on the same facades, diluting the strengths of both. The Design Team immediately appreciated the gritty industrial character present in the neighbourhood, especially in the rear lanes and alleys which are currently the focus of redevelopment. It was felt that these locations offered the “point of difference” necessary to differentiate the Central City South from the rest of Christchurch as well as other cities in New Zealand. It also provides an alternative area for the more gritty and contemporary development to occur (see Specific Recommendations: Mews Lanes and Alleys). This would reduce the need to accommodate all types of design along the main streets. The heritage facades along the existing streets could be supported by additional development more sympathetic to the style of architecture already present.

To better coordinate the facades along the main thoroughfares the current collection of verandas, lighting and furniture and the proliferation of A-board signs need to be addressed.

Recommendation: Establishing an internal system of mews, lanes and alleys connecting to one another across city blocks permits a secondary but primarily pedestrian system to be created to draw the lifestyle uses, which currently are eroding the formality of the heritage stock and traditional facades of the main thoroughfares.

Two coherent streetscape systems would be established, each serving a grouping of similar market segments. They would each require a different set of streetscape standards. The main thoroughfares represented by High Street, Manchester Street, Colombo Street and Madras Street would take on a coordinated approach to street lighting, signage, furniture and landscaping. The Council should put to bid a request for proposal from street furniture companies. In addition, building elements such as verandas and shop fronts would be managed to establish a unified shopping experience for pedestrians. A type of veranda should be identified for use and consistently applied. Landscaping along sidewalks with continual verandas is difficult. The design team recommends placing street trees within the carriageways along the parking lanes. The placement of trees in the carriageway does raise issues of underground infrastructure which will need to be studied to determine if feasible.

The secondary pedestrian system internal to the block structure will require a different set of streetscape standards. The character of the spaces created by the mews, alleys, and lanes should differ from the main thoroughfares. The gritty nature of the spaces envisioned represents a contemporary intervention into the historic industrial fabric of the neighbourhood. Paving surfaces should provide texture. Because the system will be extensive, much of it will be residential in use. Landscaping along the system can adjust to complement the surrounding uses. The design team envisions a broad range of detailing, from predominantly hardscape surfaces in commercial lanes and alleys to permit outdoor dining and events use to treed pocket parks for residential mews. Street furniture should be sparingly provided to keep the system from becoming cluttered. Lighting should be generous and attached to buildings or on overhead wiring between buildings, as should all signage.
ALLEY REDEVELOPMENT: LINER BUILDING MASKING BIGBOX RETAIL

GATEWAY BUILDING IDENTIFYING PEDESTRIAN LANE CROSSINGS
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

RETAIL MERCHANDISING

Observation: The existing retail offerings in and around the study area are in a state of flux due to a number of local and regional dynamics. However, even within this immediate context, specific strategies can be pursued to help ensure that retail goods and services consistent with, and supportive of, diverse, walkable, mixed-use development are both feasible and likely to be implemented.

Discussion: The Central City South Charrette was intended to evaluate and respond to a range of issues related to promoting sustainable infill development in the Central City South area, including retail/commercial development considerations. Though the specific study area is bounded by Lichfield Street to the North, Madras Street to the East, Moorhouse Avenue to the South and Colombo Street to the West, the retail market considerations implicit in this analysis extend well beyond these borders.

In fact, given the relatively small scale of the City and the ease with which consumers can access a wide variety of shopping options throughout the region, it is probably more appropriate to consider Christchurch as a whole, single unified retail consumer market rather than a series of discreet individual markets, although that perception may still have merit at the neighborhood scale. As such, our findings and recommendations are framed against this larger background context and the structure of this assessment is formatted to facilitate this association.

In light of competitive encroachment from close-in suburban shopping centers and the general degradation of high-end fashion retail on the City Mall -- in part, due to same -- the retail fabric of the Central City South area has been undergoing a comprehensive repositioning in response to these perceived changes in the regional market context. As a result, a constellation of discreet retail districts in the form of specific thematic merchandising aggregations has emerged to present a substantial and coherent array of appealing clustered retail offerings. These represent one of the best opportunities for building a comprehensive merchandising strategy for re-establishing the City Centre as the premier shopping destination within the larger the Christchurch regional market and the Central City South as an attractive, mixed-use neighborhood with corresponding goods and services.

However, several key impediments and issues need to be addressed in further encouraging and enabling this emergent possibility. A key to adding further support and diversity to the existing retail market is the promotion of infill residential development at reasonable urban densities to the study area. Specific regulatory constraints, discussed elsewhere in this document, make this a problematic endeavor.

Transportation and parking are two other key issues. In general, visibility and access are critical to the viability of retail and both are enhanced through a fine-grained, hierarchical network of avenues, streets and lanes that encompass a variety of transportation modes. As such, the walkability of the area is paramount, followed closely by the need to accommodate the automobile in all its functional modes including parking and, ideally, the integration of an area-wide public transit system which can promote cross-shopping within the overall study area as well as direct convenient access to nearby residential neighborhoods.

The physical urban character of the City Centre and Central City South area is still largely intact though there is clearly some erosion of the fabric toward the southern end of the study area, along Moorhouse Avenue. There remain a significant number of heritage structures of exceptional quality remain extant throughout the area, lending both a sense of continuity and permanence to the neighborhood as well as a solid asset to both compliment and contrast with as infill development commences. However, current regulatory and code policies generally discourage the adaptive reuse of many of these structures to more appropriate mixed-use structures.

Regardless, there are two locations within the study area where the physical character of both the architecture and urbanism have played a role in shaping the competitive attractiveness of the retail offerings. One of these is High Street, particularly between Lichfield and Tuam streets, and the other is the alley/lane pub café clusters at Poplar and Ash streets and South of Lichfield. These models will play a role in shaping the recommendations to follow.

The amount of retail area represented in and around the study area and in the City Centre overall is impressive relative to the size of the market represented. This can be explained somewhat by a number of factors including the large number of international visitors and Christchurch’s preeminent regional presence on the South Island. Nonetheless, the perception remains that the market in general is very well served. Given this, a clear market differentiation will be essential to maximizing capture while avoiding redundancy and overlap.

Much of the retail offerings are targeted primarily at the visitor and regional market which is understandable given the significant share of market potential these two categories represent. However, a dedicated program to promote and encourage residential development will help considerably in expanding and deepening the range of the merchandise spectrum to include more local, neighborhood and service retail.

The food and beverage offerings are somewhat more diverse by virtue of the large numbers of daytime office workers still evident in the city centre and the proximity of the Polytechnic as well as the nearby peripheral of residential neighborhoods. However, the substantial presence of international visitors remains one of the primary forces adding critical density to the market. The existing entertainment offerings would likely be considered inadequate by North American standards; a major cinema could help substantially in adding to the critical mass of attractions in the area.

While not technically part of the study area, the City Mall and its one major department store, Ballantynes, remains an important part of the city centre retail landscape and its overall regional positioning. Both have issues that will need to be addressed if they are to play an effective role in reinforcing and strengthening an overall perception of attractive, competitive retail, entertainment and dining offerings in the city centre.

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In the context of promoting sustainable infill development in the Central City South area, the retail goods and services consistent with, and supportive of, diverse, walkable, mixed-use development are both feasible and likely to be implemented.

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While not technically part of the study area, the City Mall and its one major department store, Ballantynes, remains an important part of the city centre retail landscape and its overall regional positioning. Both have issues that will need to be addressed if they are to play an effective role in reinforcing and strengthening an overall perception of attractive, competitive retail, entertainment and dining offerings in the city centre.
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

2.11 CENTRAL CITY SOUTH CHARRETTE

Residential
Mixed Residential & Commercial
Retail
Dining and Entertainment
Office
Hotel & Lodging
Industrial
Public & Institutional
Parking Garage
Auto Related
Utilities

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential
Mixed Residential & Commercial
Retail
Dining and Entertainment
Office
Hotel & Lodging
Industrial
Public & Institutional
Parking Garage
Auto Related
Utilities

EXISTING STREET FRONTAGES

- Dining and Entertainment
- Other
- Retail
- Services
- Vacant
MERCHANDISING

Recommendations:

**String of Pearls:** To help clarify and articulate specific core retail strengths, it will be necessary to build upon the specific assets already in place. There are four primary retail districts evident in the study area and its immediate environs, and several incidental sub-districts, or merchandising clusters. The four primary districts are the City Mall, Colombo Street, High Street and the big box, value-oriented retail along Moorhouse Avenue. Descriptions of each are as follows:

- **The City Mall.** The City Mall is anchored by Ballantynes department store and has traditionally been the core regional shopping district for Christchurch and the leading fashion retailers from around the Christchurch area and beyond. Though there was some weakening in its market stature evident prior to the conversion of Cashel Street to a pedestrian mall, this trend appears to have been further exacerbated by the implementation of the pedestrian mall other than a short-lived revitalization immediately after the conversion.

  Ballantynes has lost much of its “edge,” encouraging high fashion to relocate to High Street, thereby eroding much of its cache’ and drawing potential. Though fully leased, the Mall is not fulfilling its potential. A repositioning/releasing effort will be required in conjunction with Ballantynes recent efforts to upgrade its image, as described below, in order to fully realize its rightful premier role in anchoring the City Centre retail.

- **Colombo Street.** Colombo Street has taken on the role of extreme sports center for the city. A collection of large retailers in the sporting and outdoors good category has created a regional mini-anchor corridor of retailers specializing in outdoor and extreme sports specialty goods and apparel.

- **High Street.** High Street has emerged as a viable contender for fashion and boutique retail, in part due to its unique charm and character, and in part due to the inability of the City Mall to sustain itself as a reasonable competitor for these uses. This has led to a self-reinforcing trend as more and more specialty retailers, cafes and entertainment venues have moved into the area.

- **Moorhouse Avenue.** The availability of relatively inexpensive and large parcels of land in this former industrial area, combined with good local and regional access afforded by Moorhouse Avenue, made this an attractive location for large box, value-oriented retailers. Likewise, the area immediately north of Moorhouse Avenue has attracted other retail uses requiring relatively large land areas at reasonable prices, such as car and motorcycle dealerships, parts, accessory and service specialists.

Collectively, these four primary merchandising districts, properly leveraged and positioned in terms of market capture, represent a viable foundation for attracting and sustaining a large regional and visitor market, and anchor a triangular network of sub-district merchandising clusters to form potentially compelling collection of retailers and shopping attractions. Additional sub-district clusters identified include, in addition to the aforementioned auto/motorcycle cluster, a very healthy and growing design/home furnishings, an eclectic/general merchandise cluster including used books and antiques along Manchester Street, a golf/hobby cluster and an emergent adventure sports/outdoor lifestyle cluster between Lichfield and St. Asaph streets on Colombo Street.

With the implementation of traditional urban design principles and techniques and highly specific marketing strategies to help identify and distinguish this unique collection of merchants and retail categories, this array can be enhanced in such a way as to function as a “string of pearls” of discreet lifestyle/merchandising environments that is unique within the Christchurch area.

**Transportation and Parking:** A unified parking management system utilizing a sophisticated digital metering system and demand pricing should be implemented immediately to help rationalize parking within the study area and to encourage effective utilization of the asset. This system should be designed to encourage long-term users, such as office workers and retail employees, to park toward the periphery of the shopping areas thereby saving more valuable spaces convenient to the shopping districts for retail customers. This system can also be tailored to encourage higher turnover in the most accessible parking locations, enhancing the perception of parking availability. This system can also be tuned to allow for time of day and day of week variations to maximize the potential for shared parking and/or to encourage evening and weekend patronage of Central City merchants.

Finally, this system can and should be linked to an expanded downtown trolley network that would function as a legitimate public transportation asset. The trolley could be configured to accept the same digital fare cards used by the parking system thereby encouraging downtown workers and visitors alike to “park once and walk.” Due to the relatively expansive nature of the Central City and the Central City South retail area, this will help encourage more cross-shopping between areas as well as encourage close-in residential consumers to shop downtown rather than head toward the nearby suburban centers. Merchants can also easily encourage additional patronage by “validating” purchases through the direct addition of more parking time on their customer’s digital parking cards.
Christchurch Retail Issues:

- Market
- Merchandising
- Transportation
- Parking
- Policy/Regulatory
- Physical Planning/Design

Retail Market:

- Market Components
- Market positioning/competitive framework

Illustrative Merchandising Districts/Clusters

City Mall
- Reconfirm Concept of Grand Urban Department Store
- Regional Branded Retail
- Daytime Worker
- Visitor Retail

Adventure/Outdoor Lifestyle
- Hobbies

Big Box Discount Retailers

High Street
- Specialty retail
- Fashion
- Boutiques
- Cafes

Design/Home Furnishings

Eclectic/General Merchandise

Automobile-Cycle Sales

New Fabric

Thoroughfare Network

Lane Network

Activity Centers

Illustrative Merchandising Districts/Clusters
**Market positioning/Competitive framework:**

- Visitor
- Regional
- Local

**Visitor Market:**

- Enhance the Visitor Experience
- Emphasis on unique local, regional and national retailers

**The Evolution of Retail, Urban to Suburban -- the transportation/land-use connection...**

**Regional Retail Scale Comparative (Illustrative)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Square Footage/Residential Unit</th>
<th>Relative Scale</th>
<th>Average Distance To Daily Needs</th>
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<tr>
<td>T-4/6 Urban</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>1/2 mile</td>
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<td>T-3 Sub-Urban</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sprawl</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3-5 miles or more</td>
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</table>
**General Recommendations**

**Christchurch Retail Issues**
- Transportation
- Parking

**Transportation:**
- Vehicular Access and Parking
- Comprehensively Managed Parking District
- Digitally Controlled Demand Pricing
- Link to sub-regional, City Center Transit
**Regional Market:**
- Improve access, visibility and parking
- Leverage diverse merchandising clusters
- Infill to reinforce/strengthen full spectrum

**Local Market:**
- Increase density of Residential population
- Enhance walkability
- Create authentic local diversity
Typical Large Parcel Infill Scenario (existing condition)

Proposed Alternative

Current Market Response
General Recommendations

- Increase density of Residential population
- Enhance walkability
- Create authentic local diversity

Big Boxes:

- Leverage Regional Draw
- Densify residential to create more balanced mix
- Urbanize over time

Visual Merchandising

- Lighting
- Signage
- Storefronts
- Visual Merchandising

- Lighting
  1. Hi-intensity
  2. Focus on Product
  3. More intense than Ambient light
**Signage:**

1. No internally illuminated box signs
2. Consider a variety of sign formats for different effects

**Visual Merchandising**

- *Entrance Enhancements*
  1. Topiary
  2. Sculptural Elements
  3. Special Lighting
  4. Inlaid logos/medallions, etc.
Visual Merchandising

- Shop fronts
  1. Should begin to tell the story....
  2. Should work with the architecture

Visual Merchandising

1. Clean, simple, artistic
2. Reinforces the story
3. Should be focused and concise

A Grand Urban Department Store

- Business Improvement
- District/Unified Management
- Transportation
- Parking
- Residential
- Supportive Policies
TRAFFIC AND TRANSIT

Observation: The current system of one-way pairs introduced in the 1960’s is designed to rapidly move cars through and around central Christchurch. The system’s efficiency is generated by the pairing of one-ways running east-to-west and north-to-south forming a high capacity, perimeter thoroughfare around the Central City.

The transit system of Christchurch provides a high frequency and mostly reliable service. The existing Bus Exchange serves to consolidate bus transfers from across the City. It will reach capacity by 2008. A free service called the Shuttle runs throughout the city centre with a stop at the Bus Exchange.

The existing tram system in central Christchurch operates primarily as a tourist attraction. The City once had a substantial trolley system which was dismantled in favour of buses.

Discussion: From the literature it is apparent that the one-way pair system was designed to encourage the transition of Christchurch into a modern city. At the time of the implementation of the one way road system transportation engineering was attempting to address the efficient dispersal of vehicle traffic through a system designed to minimise conflicts between cars and cars and pedestrians. Designed to provide more efficient vehicle movement throughout the central city and to areas beyond the CBD, the one-way pairs opened up the City to expansion beyond the immediate core, where additional improvements in the form of arterial thoroughfares and highways, helped facilitate the suburban expansion of the metropolitan area.

By engaging in a system calibrated to the regional, city level the proponents of one-way pairs inadvertently created a hostile environment at the local neighbourhood level. The one-way system raises traffic speeds which increase noise levels on adjacent properties. The speed and volume also make it less attractive for pedestrians. Over long periods of time the surrounding businesses turn away from the street and the corridor transitions into an auto dependent environment.

The consolidation of bus service for the central city into one Bus Exchange has led to an increase in the system’s reliability and capacity for higher service levels. Commuter ridership continues to increase – however, the location of the Exchange on a one-way, east-west pair limits the number of buses that can access the facility. Once the facility reaches a certain level of bus use congestion due to access limitations will prevent additional capacity increases and erode service reliability.

The tram line could provide a complementary service to the bus system. Light rails capacity to shuttle people along a fixed and reliable series of routes encourages retail development more so than buses because of the “experience” of the ride.

Recommendation: In order to encourage the revitalisation of the study area into a pedestrian active neighbourhood the one-way pairs should revert to two-way streets. The impact of a staged reversal on traffic flow would need to be monitored. The grid system should have the capacity to absorb the cross town traffic that would be redirected onto other streets. However, the design team recommends that the system should revert back in its entirety because doing so in stages would cause a protracted period of driver confusion. The impact to road reserve requirements for one-way versus two-way streets should be analysed to determine if carriageway widths can be reduced to increase footpath widths and/or to add tree plantings along parking lanes.

When the Bus Exchange reaches capacity in terms of its ability to accommodate additional buses during peak hours the design team recommends that a second exchange be built in another location, preferably north of Worcester Street or at the multi-modal transit station along Moorhouse and Manchester and as a system the reliability of bus service is constrained when only one point of transfer is offered. A second exchange would alleviate congestion problems and more efficiently handle bus routing coming into the city from various points.

The tram system should be expanded to create a networked system of loops servicing the study area and connecting the multi-modal station, CPIT, Jade Stadium and central Hadley Park with the central city area.
PARKING

Observation: On-street parking occurs throughout the study area. Surface parking lots are more prevalent at the southern end of the neighbourhood where large format retailing has taken hold. Parking structures are located strategically throughout the centre city proximate to retail and employment predominantly in the northern study area.

Discussion: As new development occurs the existing supply of parking will no longer be sufficient. New residents will require spaces, as will new businesses and visiting tourists and day-trippers. Infill development offers an opportunity to provide parking to support new residents and to address on-site storm water retention.

Subsidised parking by the City competes with market rate parking. At a cost differential of almost 4 times actual prices the subsidised parking removes a significant supply of parking from use.

Recommendation: A managed parking system will need to be put in place as new development occurs. The neighbourhood is readily divided into four quadrants into which parking garages can be inserted. The design team suggests that demand pricing utilising a digital system be implemented. Based on differing rates for location and time the smart card based system can also permit retailers to add time to shopper’s cards.

At the smaller scale, incorporating parking structures within mid-block redevelopment creates a dedicated parking supply for residents. Excess structured parking can be offered to commercial users who also have access to the existing on-street supply.
SAFETY

 Observation: A significant live music and bar scene has established itself in the study area, supported by the CPIT student population. The venues are a regional draw and bring many patrons to the area at night and on weekends. Late night hours of operation for bars and clubs ensure a steady supply of alcohol sales.

 Discussion: The study area has been called Christchurch’s playground. It offers the only large concentration of establishments selling liquor in the City. Coupled with the live music venues and other nightclubs which have set up shop, the nightlife scene has become an established part of the community. Vandalism is an issue with many residents of the neighbourhood voicing concerns. The police confirmed that night activity could be quite problematic. The alleys and lanes, some not lit very well, provide places for deviant behaviour and vandalism.

 Recommendation: The redevelopment of the study area depends on creating a sense of safety. Many of the ills currently faced by the neighbourhood will be mitigated by the influx of new residents and eyes on the street brought about by new development. In the meantime, better lighting and the designation of safe routes should be studied. Longer hours of police and security surveillance may also assist. The NZ Police in Christchurch had several interesting proposals to discourage late night bar patrons from roaming the streets intoxicated. One-way exits at bars could be utilised after certain hours.
CONSENT PROCESS

Observation: Impediments to the early issuance of consents was raised as a major concern of numerous investors and business owners in the following facilitated workshops:

- Planning, Zoning and Building consents
- Transportation, Fire and Public Works
- Landowners
- Tenants, Businesses and Retailers

Discussion: The facilitated session on Planning Zoning and Building Consents highlighted the need for the following matters to be addressed by the Council:

In response to lengthy consent periods on development applications being experienced by the investors and developers in the locality and the inconvenience of assessment officers leaving roles it was recommended that greater incentives be offered to encourage the appointment of an officer within council to act as a point of contact for all branch and agency approvals and to champion better urban development outcomes for the neighbourhood.

During discussions in the second half of the charrette it became apparent that some members of the business community felt that Council should consider the formation of an independent agency to administer the planning and development of Central South City. In light of these comments, the Council may wish to investigate the suitability of models such as the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority and the East Perth Redevelopment Authority in Western Australia – which have autonomous planning and development powers and strong council representation.

Moreover it was suggested that Christchurch City Holdings could invest in the neighbourhood and foster a series of demonstration projects.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Christchurch City Council investigate incentives to ensure the long term retention of a Project Manager to oversee the Central City South project and that the business community be encouraged to work closely with the Manager in a spirit of collaboration and to enable the manager to gain a greater understanding of the value of the project to the future of the City.

It is also recommended that the Christchurch City Council investigate the formation of a statutory body with planning and development powers and staff to manage the urban renewal of the neighbourhood, foster affordable housing and to undertake demonstration projects.
ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Observation: Christchurch has a strong Chinese and Indian population. The number of restaurants catering to these two cuisines is significant given the City’s size.

Discussion: As a means of assimilating into new societies the neighbourhood is the ideal method. The process of immigration by new groups to new countries has always taken the form of ethnic communities within cities. Chinatowns exist throughout the world. They provide benefits to the immigrants who move to them as well as the surrounding city introducing each to the other. Familiar business and social networks make the transition from one culture and society easier. They provide employment, education and family. For the City, ethnic communities revitalise neighbourhoods and introduce new cultures to local residents.

Recommendation: Focusing the energy of these two ethnic groups into identifiable business communities will bring vitality and energy to the streets of the study area. We recommend that the two communities be located adjacent to a major development focus such as the Council Property site. Because their presence is substantial enough at present, it is recommended that the private and public sectors actively target local Chinese and Indian business owners and institutions to promote the idea of a visible and centralised district for each.
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*Location: Christchurch City of Christchurch, New Zealand*
APPENDIX

2.29 CENTRAL CITY SOUTH CHARRETTE PLAN SERIES

STUDY AREA
APPENDIX

CENTRAL CITY SOUTH CHARRETTE

PLAN SERIES

INFill DEVELOPMENT

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REGIONAL STRUCTURE
CENTRAL CITY SOUTH CHARRETTE  2.36
PLAN SERIES

APPENDIX

2.37 CENTRAL CITY SOUTH CHARRETTE

PLAN SERIES

APPENDIX

REINFORCING REGIONAL STRUCTURE AND VISUAL CONNECTIONS

CENTRAL CITY SOUTH CHARRETTE 2.37
PLAZA INTERSECTION AT ST ASAPH STREET & MANCHESTER STREET
GATEWAY TO PEDESTRIAN ALLEYS AND LANES
ENTERTAINMENT, RETAIL AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT TUAM STREET
TYPICAL COMMERCIAL REAR LANE
TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL REAR LANE
LINER BUILDING MASKING BIG BOX RETAIL
CASHEL STREET MALL GARDEN IN THE CITY
MEETING NOTES

Future Directions – Meeting #1
Planning, Zoning, and Resource Consents

Planning and Zoning

The session was started off by a discussion of the current zoning that is applicable to the study area. As a general rule, zoning in the area is very flexible and allows for a broad range of uses as well as building types. Specifically, the current zoning allows and controls for the following:

- Height Limit = 20m
- Plot ratio of 2 (no bonus for the retention of heritage buildings due mainly to a shortage of listed buildings in this area)
- Building setback from the road boundary = 4.5m setback from Durham, Manchester, Madras, St Asaph, Tuam & Moorhouse and the setback to be landscaped. No building setback for other streets in this zone
- All outdoor storage areas to be screened from the road by solid fencing or landscaping no less than 1.5m in height
- Recession plane requirement for all zones with buildings (up to 45m in height) to comply with a 65 degree angle measured 10m from the road boundary. Refer to Plan clause 2.2.1(d) for diagram

While zoning has influenced current development in the area, it is felt that zoning has not been a substantial factor limiting development. In the southern part of the study area, a building setback is required which has had the effect of pushing buildings back from the street and eroding the streetwall and urban condition of the neighbourhood.

Seismic Strengthening

Building Act requirements for seismic strengthening is another regulation that is having a substantial impact on the study area. The Building Act is a piece of national legislation and requires that the substantial strengthening of buildings when a change of use is proposed. The definition of an earthquake-prone building, as set out in section 122 of The Building Act 2004, is significantly more extensive and is now applied to all buildings, excluding most residential buildings regardless of construction. It is no longer restricted to buildings of unreinforced masonry. Although the definition does not apply to most single family homes however it does apply to those buildings that have 2 or more storeys and 3 or more household units, essentially the bulk of buildings in the study area. It is estimated that about 16,406 Christchurch buildings are potentially affected by the changes under the Act. Most heritage buildings, listed or otherwise, are impacted by this legislation.

At present, the proposal is that when an application for a consent for a significant alteration to a building is received and the building has an earthquake-prone strength of less than 10% of the Code, the building would be required to be strengthened to at least 33% of Code as part of the consent. For earthquake-prone, dangerous or insanitary heritage buildings, specialist recovery management plans will be applied that seek the preservation of the heritage fabric as well as human life and other property.

Given that these seismic strengthening requirements place a large financial burden on property owners, means of assisting with the strengthening of buildings was discussed. At present, grants to heritage buildings have largely been the only vehicle for assisting developers. There are concerns with have grants as the only means to remedy the problem given the limitations on Council funding as well as the uncertainty that developers face in being able to secure these grants. Additionally, these grants are only available to listed heritage buildings as opposed to older buildings that are an important part of the urban fabric but not listed. The transfer of development rights or a land swap was raised as another potential mechanism to provide incentives for the strengthening and retention of heritage buildings.

Parking Regulations

Parking regulations were also discussed at this session. A concern was voiced about the appropriateness of current parking regulations for the area if there is a desire to promote development that is more urban in nature. On-site car parking for residential is required at 1 space/unit plus 1 visitor space/5 units. There is no GLFA parking ratio for residential uses in this zone. Both the parking that is required and is being provided have had the tendency to create gaps in the urban fabric. Below grade parking is possible, however there is a high water table in the area which generally exists at 4 m below grade. As a result it is often only practical to provide one level of below grade parking.

Future Directions – Meeting #2 Notes
Transport and Public Works

Bus Services

The Red Bus company initiated the conversation by discussing their operations in the area and throughout Christchurch. At present they operate between 130 and 180 buses at the peak time. Service has improved markedly over the past few years, with 5 to 15 minute headways on many routes during the day. At present there is a 50/50 funding split with 50% of bus services being paid for by fares and the other 50% being covered by government subsidies.

The free shuttle bus initiated by the Council has also been highly successful. This shuttle bus circles the Central City, running through the study area on Colombo and Madras Street. Concern was voiced by some residents that the shuttle operates along a north-south axis in the Central City and that a move should be made to expand the service of the shuttle in an east-west direction.

Improvement in bus service has been reflected in patronage of the system. Patronage had been declining over the past few decades, however ridership is now back up at 1975 levels. Greater frequency and reliability were cited as a major reason for this increase in ridership. Congestion is a major issue for the operation of the bus service within the study area. Colombo Street, which is intended to function as a mobility corridor, faces some of the most severe problems. At present there is no enforcement of bus priority lanes, rendering them largely ineffective as the location of one parked, private vehicle within the priority lanes congests the entire system.

Bus Exchange

Bus congestion is also a concern around the Bus Exchange. Although the Bus Exchange may have sufficient capacity at present for commuters using the transit lounge, there are problems with the facility being able to handle the actual capacity of the buses in the loading and unloading zones. The result of this congestion is that bus traffic becomes backed up out on Lichfield and Colombo Street at peak times. Beyond congestion, the Bus Exchange has also been the subject of much concern. One of the complaints voiced in the session was that the Bus Exchange is a regional facility operating in a neighbourhood setting. A consequence of this is the deadening effect that the Bus Exchange has upon Lichfield Street.

Others indicated that the Bus Exchange is a focal point for the Central City and for that reason it’s location proximate to the centre of town was important for the success of the City. While many charrette participants bemoaned the removal of buses from Cathedral Square, there was general agreement that current demand and political will necessitated their removal.

Roading Barriers

There was a brief conversation about improving connections across Moorhouse Avenue and along Ferry Road. While large magnets like the Catholic Cathedral, CPIT, and Jade Stadium had been laid out along this diagonal line, the linkages between these sites and the study area have been broken. Also, questions were raised about why the old rail station on Moorhouse Avenue couldn’t be revived provide and inter-modal terminal for the City. A member of the Barbadoses Cultural Group as well as other charrette participants sited the strong concern that the system of one-way streets in the area created barriers between different users. In particular, the one-way street on Lichfield cuts the study area off from the Central City and the one-ways on Madras and Barbadoses Street isolate the Catholic Cathedral and CPIT.

Wastewater Management

A member of the Council’s waste water management team spoke about the possible implication of new environmental rules governing the treatment of storm water run-off. He indicated that in the future all new developments in the study area would require a resources consent from ECan. These consents would likely require that open space be set aside for water retention and cleaning. Given the lack of will by Council to develop and fund a catchment-wide management system, the burden is likely to fall on individual property owners who may be required to set aside 5% of their property for storm water retention. These retention facilities could take the form of green spaces or be incorporated into the developments.
Future Directions – Meeting # 3 Notes  
Open Space, Recreation, Community Matters, and Sustainability

Urban Open Spaces
The session was begun by a discussion of open spaces and their possibility for the study area. The design team indicated their recommendation that open spaces in this area be more urban and hardscape than the traditional suburban park arguing that this area is not suburban. The team stated how they felt that in an urban context, the streets and spaces between buildings were more functional in serving as open spaces.

The wisdom of creating a large open space in the area was questioned given the proximity of other large open spaces in the area and region as well as the cost of acquiring large tracks of private land. A session participant indicated the opposite concern that a collection of smaller parks dispersed across the city are more difficult to maintain and less functional than larger urban parks. This was felt to support the broader argument that the existing larger regional parks like Hagley Park and the Port Hills provided the primary active recreation spaces in the city as opposed to the smaller reserves. Smaller spaces within more urban conditions were cited as being successful, one of which is the pocket park directly opposite the Civic Offices. The design team expressed their desire for the possibility of a series of small, intimate spaces that guided one through the streets and lanes of the study area. Another participant indicted the regret that some of these smaller spaces had been eroded over time. In particular, some of the iconic structures that used to grace the triangles along High Street had been removed and relocated to other parts of the city. The result has been the diminution of these spaces over time.

Development Contributions

A session participant raised the concern about the current development contributions policy with regards to open spaces. He felt that it placed an unreasonable burden on current and future developers, particularly given their existence in an already urbanized portion of the city. Unlike greenfield development sites, developments within the study area were not generating demand for new open spaces or infrastructure but using that which already exists.

Landscaping

Appropriate landscaping for the study area was discussed. the concern was raised that at present the landscaping requirements do little more than beautify car parks. The design team indicated that plantings would be a part of the open spaces they would propose, but that they would not be the dominate feature as they are in suburban parks.

Location of open spaces

Another participant indicated the importance of appropriately locating recreation spaces, in Christchurch with the easterly winds and location of the sun, space located on the south side of the street and where they are sheltered from the wind tend to be the most successful. The C-4 Café on High Street was sited as an example of this.

Street Trees

One concern that was raised was the issue of vandalism particularly as it relates to new street trees. In Christchurch roughly 60% of street trees have to be replaced as a result of vandalism. The need to protect street trees or deal with this problem is essentially if network of plantings is to be established.

Sustainability in Context

Sustainability of development in the area was raised as a concern, specifically the value of doing planning in a smaller area if the bigger concerns of energy use and an automobile dominated society are not addressed. The design team offered that the reuse and adaptation of existing properties did go a long way to meeting sustainability objectives. Similarly, the type of development that is being promoted in the study area is more pedestrian oriented.

Future Directions – Meeting # 4 Notes  
Elected Officials

Introduction to charrette process

The leaders of the design team opened the session by walking the City Councillors and Community Board member through the charrette process to date. After this brief introduction to the project methodology and objectives, the session was opened up to general discussion.

The first Councillor to speak highlighted four concerns that he felt were impacting redevelopment in the area. First were his concerns about air quality in the area and the concern that exhaust from automobiles would adversely affect new residents to the area. Related to this, he indicated his desire to see light rail introduced as a means of improving air quality and reducing traffic. He noted that people in Christchurch needed protection from the South Island’s weather which could be adverse at times. As an example he mentioned that he felt the City Mall should be enclosed. Finally, he indicated his concern about the effect that the concentration of prostitution and adult entertainment services were having on the study area.

In response to this last concern, the design team stated their belief that they area was being dominated by a youth culture. Lack of residents or other activities in the study area made it an ideal location for youth to escape their homes and supervision in the suburbs. redevelopment of the area will help address this problem by introducing the supervision that is currently lacking. A Council staff member also indicated that commercial activities, particularly of the kind found along High Street, can also serve as good activators for ensuring that the area is appropriately managed.

The next Councillor to speak indicated her desire to see action result from this planning process. She mentioned previous planning seminars that had occurred in 1992 and 1998 and questioned how much had subsequently been implemented. So as not to replicate past efforts, she urged the design team to review previous planning studies that had been conducted. The Councillor requested that the zoning of the area be considered by this charrette to ensure that it was appropriate for the area. Finally, the Councillor indicated the need to develop a focal point within the study area as at present the neighbourhood lacked a defining element.

The Community Board member in attendance opened his remarks by stating that the design team should work to encourage and activate the music scene that currently exists in the area. He felt that future designs for the area should build upon the energy that that venues like Mojo Music or the Blues Bar bring to the neighbourhood. The Community Board member mentioned that he felt affordability is an important component that should be considered in developing plans for the area. He was concerned that redevelopment would either push out existing businesses or be limited to only the more well-to-do. Finally, this Community Board member voiced his support for the need of the planning study to support and build capacity at CPIT.

The next Councillor to speak raised three key points closest to her concerns. The first was expressing the desire that the design team indicate where future development should be focused. She also mentioned that the study and redevelopment in the area should seek to develop a precinct with identity. Finally, and as a part of this identity, she stated that the area should be branded with a strong name.

The fourth Councillor to speak made a strong push for development that was organic. He mentioned his joy in experience the area as a youth when he was able to explore network of lanes throughout the area. He felt that the most successful development initiatives where those that had a scale and content that fit within the urban fabric. As the antithesis of this, he urged that the design team steer away from any concepts that were heavily themed fearing that to do so would limit the relevance of the redevelopment as conditions changed in the future. This Councillor was also concerned about affordability being a consideration any proposal falling out of the charrette process. Finally he urged that consideration be given to the vistas that are created by the triangles along High Street.
Measuring Notes – Meeting # 5 Notes

Seismic Strengthening

This session began with an extensive discussion of the financial burden placed upon property owners that resulted from the new seismic strengthening codes of the Building Act. While these new codes are important to protect people from the real dangers presented by seismic activity and cannot be ignored, concern was expressed that finance mechanisms needed to be developed that would enable property owners to strengthen their buildings. Possibilities included appropriate appraisal of existing properties, tax relief or incentives, and grants.

Administration

Another concern was with the regulation and administration of the provisions of the building act. Building owners were concerned that under the current administration of the building code, consents for minor alterations had the possibility of opening up much large requirements. As a consequence, some building owners who avoid doing smaller, needed maintenance because the risk of triggering larger renovations.

Property owners and developers also felt frustrated with Council bureaucracy. A couple of session participants indicated that the burden of red-tape created by the zoning and consent process was enough to deter otherwise well intentioned investors and developers in the Central City. A representative of one of the big-box retailers in the area suggested that while red-tape is a concern, one of the best approaches for would be developers is to build relationships with Council officers as a means of clarifying and facilitating the development process.

Owners and Business Association

Discussion amongst session participants led to the suggestion that perhaps an association of property owners and business in the area should be developed. This association could act as a liaison with the Council to raise important concerns shared by property owners and developers. The association could also help to focus the Council’s attention on needed changes or improvements within the district.

Parking

The management of parking is a large concern for businesses and property owners in the area. Businesses are concerned that the Council is engaging a predatory parking enforcement that does little to alleviate parking problems, but is a huge deterrent to local commerce and trade. At present parking in the district is a deterrent to people visiting the area and should be used as a means of attracting people. All retailers and business owners had been quite pleased with the Council offering the first hour free within their parking garages and felt that this was the type of constructive parking management that the Council should be employing. Owners had also felt that the mixture of parking available in the area (short and long term) was also positive.

Road Barriers

The issue of barriers created by the existing traffic system was raised once again. In particular, there was the concern that High Street was severed at Manchester Street due to the configuration of this intersection. The design team was urged to look at this intersection to consider how it may be better configured to allow people access.

Arts and Culture

Another property owner expressed the desire for more arts and culture within the study area. In particular, the suggestion was made that there be more public art located along the footpaths and in some of the public spaces throughout the area. Additionally, there was the recommendation that this area sponsor some major event as a means of drawing attention to all of the restaurants, cafes, and stores that do exist in the area.

Measuring Notes – Meeting # 6 Notes

Retailers and Businesses

The session began with the team’s retail experts giving a short presentation on their observations about the retail market within the Central City. These experts noted that at present the Central City, particularly around Cathedral Square, has been reposition itself to the visitor market as a response to competition faced by out of town retailers. The noted that where retail has been successful in the district, such as along High Street, it is because these retailers have been creating and serving a market niche that cannot be found anywhere else in Christchurch or the South Island.

Extension of Tram

One area merchant expressed the desire that consideration be given to the extension of the tram down High Street. They felt that this would not only bring more shoppers to the area, but that it would also create a better ambience for the area. The extension of the tram could act as a link to the City Mall and the rest of the Central City.

Road Barriers

A perennial issue, the conflict between one-way streets and local retail trade was raised by this sessions participants. The request was made that one-way traffic be eliminated from the Central City as a means of promoting a better urban experience for pedestrians and shoppers.

Moorhouse Ave Retailers

These big box retailers are unique in their location within the Central City. Often these retailers are located away from urban centres. This offers and opportunity for local retailers who can possible leverage their position between these large retailers along Moorhouse Avenue and the core of the Central City. Position correctly, retailers within the study area can capture shoppers who are drawn by the regional retailers located on Moorhouse Avenue.

Retail Diversity

The need to maintain retail diversity was also discussed. Not only would this provide vibrancy to the market within the study area, but it would also provide resilience by protecting against swings in certain segments of the market.
Future Directions – Meeting # 7 Notes
Urban Design, Heritage and Safety

Concentration and Operating Hours of Bars

This session began with a discussion of some safety and CEPTED concerns facing the study area. The NZ Police noted that the feel of the area changed markedly from the day to the evening. By day, it’s a fairly safe and pleasant environment, however in the evening this changes substantially due to the influx of people visiting the numerous bars and nightclubs in the area. This concentration of people, often young, becomes more problematic as bars and clubs are allowed to stay open throughout the night. As a consequence, the NZ Police must respond to a number of disturbances from 3 AM to 5 AM. The NZ Police feel that this could partly be alleviated by modifying the operating hours of bars or considering their distribution. However the Police also noted that bars in and of themselves are not the only concern as you are able to purchase alcohol at any hour of the day from a dairy or convenience store.

Lighting

The NZ Police, supported by a couple local property owners, indicated that there was a need for better lighting in the district, particularly in the lanes and alleys. At present, the lack of sufficient lighting creates a number of spaces where undesirable activity occurs.

Lanes

The NZ Police also noted concerns with safety in some of the lanes, particularly the lane that runs adjacent the Bus Exchange. One suggestion put forth was the gating of lanes in the evening to prevent these spaces from becoming problem areas.

Surveillance Cameras

The NZ Police noted that the study area does not contain any surveillance cameras. The addition of cameras in the area could help to reduce some problems with crime in the area.

Folding Gates – Roll Down Doors

Some ground floor retailers have had problems with their store front windows being broken by vandals. This has resulted in a couple of them having to install fold down gates or roll down doors. These doors have the potential to create an unwelcoming environment. A concern was also expressed as to the effect that these gates and doors would have when applied to heritage buildings.

Residents – Important to Safety

The ability to attract more residents into the area was seen as vitally important to enhancing safety. The charrette facilitator indicated that there is always a tension in neighbourhoods as they transition and that many problems are resolved as more residents move in and police their neighbourhoods and property.

Verandas

The meeting discussion then moved to heritage issues. One topic discussed was the coherence of verandas, or lack thereof, in the study area. The disparate use of materials and styles was a concern for creating coherence in the area. One of the Council heritage staff indicated that there were no hard and fast rules for verandas in the area. He sited the example of a new veranda on a more modern construction that differed greatly in material and style from the historic verandas of the area, but that was still quite successful in achieving a coherent form and function. A concern was also voiced about advertising signage placed on verandas that then obscured or created a cluttered look for the streetscape. A final concern was mentioned that verandas cast the storefronts into shadow thereby making it for retailers to indicate that there shop is open.

Signage

Concerns were expressed about the amount of on street advertising, particularly A boards and T boards. One retailer countered that these were important to indicate to customers that they were open for trade. There was the expression of the need for greater coordination in the district for signage. The counter example of the conventional shopping mall was sited where their tight signage controls amongst retailers is important for creating coherence and giving certainty to other retailers operating in the mall. This organisation at the district level would allow retailers in the study area to compete with other shopping areas and malls through out the city.

Council Organization and Project Management

A property owner and investor indicated that he felt in the past the Council had been more cooperative in their work with potential developers. He had felt that the application of rules was more consultative than it currently is. He expressed the concern that this difficulty of developers to work in a streamline fashion ran the risk of discouraging reinvestment in the area.

Funding for Heritage Buildings

Given that many regulations impacting heritage buildings come from the national government, the question was posed as to how the Council can better facilitate the preservation of heritage buildings in the area. A heritage planner for the Council mentioned that at present the Council’s primary methods is heritage grants. The amount of funding available for grants was limited to that which is currently allocated in this funding cycle. There was the suggestion that the Council needs to better lobby the national government to ensure that national regulations are also supported by sufficient funding to achieve these regulation’s objectives.

Value of Heritage Buildings

The expense of retrofitting heritage buildings raised the corollary issue of the valuation of heritage buildings. The concern was expressed that at present perhaps heritage buildings needed to be reassessed to incorporate the costs of retrofitting. At present, the valuation of heritage buildings may not be accurately reflecting the cost associated with seismic upgrades.
I write, first, to thank you and Council officers for the opportunity to attend various meetings of the recent Urban Planning and Design Workshop for the Central City South Study, from which was generated a wealth of new ideas for revitalisation of the Central City.

I now offer some additional thoughts aimed at sustaining a growing momentum for further co-ordinated action, initially towards the generation of options for a hierarchy of concept plans from which specific projects could be brought to fruition. In that connection, it is worth noting the following provisions of:
(a) The Long Term Council Community Plan under which a stated outcome is to “prepare concept plans for urban renewal and environmental improvements of the city, including the Central City, which address the effects of urban renewal on people and communities.” (see p.35 Volume 2, 2004 LTCCP issue); and
(b) Section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002 under which local authorities are required to identify all reasonably practicable options for the achievement of objectives and also to assess options by considering, inter alia, the benefits and costs of each option in terms of the present and future social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the district or region et alia.

Without going into such matters in detail at this stage, I offer the view that a possible way forward might be along the following lines:
• Level 1 Concept Strategy : Central City
   This should be a broad, spatially defined strategy for the Central City as a whole, taking account of functional inter-relationships with the emerging Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS). Such a Central City strategy would provide a general framework covering:
   (a) areas offering opportunities for upgrading/conservation of the urban fabric e.g. the Lichfield Lanes area; heritage character groups;
   (b) areas of underutilized land and sites occupied by obsolete land uses that offer significant potential for comprehensive redevelopment;
   (c) key locations for “major community flagship projects” (see below);
   (d) core city areas that should be enhanced as pedestrian priority precincts;
   (e) a rationalized transport framework that diverts through traffic around the peripheral arteries (i.e. the four Avenues); enhances local access to and within precincts; and provides for the use of improved inter-modal public transport systems; and
   (f) broad proposals for landscape improvements for city streets, urban spaces and Avon River embankments.

The attached plan No. 1 illustrates an initial broad concept from which other “framework” options could be derived in respect of the above listed elements.
• Level 2 - Sector Concept Plans
   These would initially comprise “structure” plans for which spatial boundaries would be set to encompass broad neighbourhood areas with coherent land use functions, taking account (inter alia) of City Plan land use zoning proposals. Alternative concept plans should be prepared to provide a basis for evaluations and the derivation of a preferred plan from which more detailed projects can be derived.

The attached plan No. 2 indicates possible boundaries for Sectors in the Central City.

• Level 3 - Precinct Concept Plans
   Within the Level 2 Sectors, there could be certain areas, comprising one or more city blocks, that possess distinctive functions and characteristics that set them apart from other “general” urban areas. Again, alternative schemes would need to be devised and evaluated.

The attached plans Nos. 3 and 4 indicate some ideas for a S.E. City Cultural precinct and a “New Urbanism” mixed-use, high-density precinct, including the CCC redevelopment scheme for the Turners and Growers site.

• Level 4 - Flagship Projects
   Within sectors/precincts there might be certain sites that deserve to be recognised/developed as unique entities, reflecting – for example - their heritage values (e.g. the Arts Centre) or their unique modern functions and forms.

As an example, the attached plan No. 5 gives some ideas for a flagship project comprising a new intra and inter-city bus exchange, parking facility, landscaped deck and mixed use, medium-high density blocks – based on a composite scheme for (a) the former King Edward barracks site, (b) part of the adjoining Police site and (c) the former Post Office Centre. It is understood that Ngai Tahu have ownership and development rights/proposals for site (a) and also ownership rights over (b). Site (c) is now in the hands of a private developer. Perhaps there may be prospects for a joint-venture scheme that could be developed by the respective parties in a phased way. Would there be any prospect of the CCC assuming the role of a “broker” to bring parties together, bearing in mind also the possibility of a composite scheme incorporating public CCC facilities e.g. a new central library.

In the above context, I do recognise that there may be certain priority projects that need to be proceeded with expeditiously and should accordingly be accepted as “given components” in the formulation of concepts plans as covered above.

On the basis of my past overseas experience as a town planner, I offer the view that a more systematic process along the above lines could, within the LGA 2002 framework, provide a catalyst for facilitating Central City revitalisation involving greater public – private sector participation, for which the City Council already also has a well established policy under the LTCCP.

I would hope that such broad concepts might, with some adaptation, provide a basis for further dialogue – building on the initiatives already prudently taken to launch the Central City South Study. Finally, in the interests of maintaining an “open mind”, I still need to confer with other interested parties but I would be particularly happy to discuss the above thoughts with you and other appropriate Council reps, at an appropriate and convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

E.G.Pryor
CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Our Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament is presently a lonely, elegant structure admired from a distance, but deprived of an appropriate setting. It is divorced from the city and constantly under attack from the remorseless flow of noisy traffic down Barbadoes St.

Our city planners identified the surrounding area many years ago as a Cultural Zone: Music Centre (renovated convent and hostel), Cathedral House (diocesan headquarters), Catholic Cathedral College and the adjacent Christchurch Polytechnic (CPIT). All these neighbours are enthusiastic to work together to transform their energies into a vital centre of youthful striving for artistic excellence. If this process could be supported by imaginative planning, the cathedral might become the real heart of the district, nourishing creative enterprise by its spiritual inspiration, its magnificent interior acoustic, and its stunning architectural vision.

It is really exciting to foresee the possibility that more pedestrians might be encouraged to walk through this precinct, and to help breath new life into the cathedral. It may be instructive to compare the relative locations of Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral. They are positioned at each end of the same street, but the Catholic Cathedral attracts a constant flow of visitors and worshippers (with a daily afternoon full choral Mass), largely because it is adjacent to the major rail junction (underground and surface) of Victoria Station.

I would like to commend the very clever solutions and concepts proposed by the consultant planners in the recent Central City South Charrette Forum. These offer the city a unique opportunity to revitalise and recognise our area, and I hope the whole community responds with the same ardent enthusiasm expressed by all who have become aware of this great vision.

With heartfelt thanks for the chance to contribute,

Sincerely,

Don Whelan
Musical Director
Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament
1 April, 2006