















### **3. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRENT MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

#### **3.1 Operative City Plan and current regulatory methods.**

To establish whether the District does have areas of special character and how best to manage such areas, it is useful to review the current City Plan approach. The operative City Plan identifies Special Amenity Areas (SAMs) as being areas within the Living Zones that are distinctive from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Initiated in 1995 through the development of the Christchurch City Plan, they were well documented areas or neighbourhoods considered to have a character<sup>4</sup> worth retaining. As such objectives and policies and a range of regulatory provisions were sought through the City Plan development to protect the character of the SAMs. However, during the progression of the City Plan to it becoming operative, quite a number of these proposed provisions were removed or weakened.

SAMs are generally located in the older, established central city and suburban neighbourhoods. Currently there are 38 SAMs of which 11 are within the Four Avenues of Christchurch City Centre, with the remainder spread throughout the Christchurch's suburban areas. The characteristics that SAMs were noted for varied including: mature tree-lined streets; buildings and associated landscapes that had a strong relationship to the surrounding environment; the landscape and open space qualities and; the quality and/or coherence of the architectural qualities of the buildings, or; a combination of these characteristics. The character of each SAM was considered unique, for example although a number of SAMs were identified for the relationship between buildings and the street. This relationship could be due to the intimate relationship between the buildings and the street, or alternatively, for the spacious open character of the streetscape. Appendix 1 includes a table summarising the characteristics identified within the existing SAM's, where each SAM has been identified in terms of scale, namely small (comprising 0-20 lots), medium (comprising 21-50 lots) and large (comprising 50+ lots).

The current SAM provisions include specific rules to maintain "special amenity" or key character elements and guide development within the SAM. These provisions include larger (or smaller) building setbacks from the street, external appearance, height, density and section size, for example. In addition each SAM has a character guide that has been produced to assist developers and planners understand the elements that gives each SAM its special character. The intent of SAMs is not for heritage protection or heritage conservation purposes. As such they are not intended to prevent building demolition for example. But rather, the SAM provisions are to guide redevelopment of sites/buildings such that they reflect the local character. There are no SAM controls over demolition or removal of character buildings<sup>5</sup>, although the objectives and policies of the City Plan identify heritage values as being a key element in the special amenity of the SAMs.

#### **3.2 Effectiveness of the current regulatory approach**

Evidence indicates that the SAM objectives are not always being met. This is particularly apparent from the quality of resource consent applications for new buildings within SAMs.

The following regulatory provisions are currently used to manage areas of special character, listed from most prolific to least prolific application of the provision to the areas of special character:

- Street scene - building setback rule
- Site size (applied via down zoning or site size minimum) – to manage site size and building density
- External appearance
- Building height
- Outdoor living space minimum
- Design guidelines (Akaroa and Lyttelton)

---

<sup>4</sup> Character may be described as collation of physical elements, i.e. buildings, topography, landscape etc developed by people, in a place, over time, that contribute to the identity of that place and the people who inhabit it.

<sup>5</sup> Some buildings may be protected as heritage buildings by other provisions in the City Plan.

































