

Renewal for Christchurch

A new Christchurch is emerging as the anchor projects forming the heart of the resurrected city ramp up.

BY WARWICK ISAACS, DIRECTOR, CHRISTCHURCH CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT



Crew working on the concrete foundation for the Bus Interchange.

PHOTOGRAPH - COURTESY OF CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY AUTHORITY.

CHRISTCHURCH IS CURRENTLY bustling with construction sites as work continues to rebuild the city following the major earthquakes that struck in 2010 and 2011.

With extensive work needed, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) was established on 29 March 2011 as the agency leading and coordinating the ongoing recovery effort.

Developing a plan

The Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU) is the team within CERA dedicated to the development of central city rebuild projects. It has been working closely with the Christchurch City Council (CCC), various government agencies, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the private sector to coordinate work throughout the city to deliver the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan (CCRP).

This plan was developed in 2012 and draws on the work by the CCC's *Share an Idea* campaign, where the public provided ideas about how they thought the city should look and function.

To finalise the plan, CERA commissioned a team of experts in urban design, architecture, commercial development and finance. They produced a blueprint with details of key civic and community assets - known as the anchor projects - as well as plans for the central business district, its size, layout, public realm and central city streets.

Working for the Crown and CCC is the Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT). This alliance of construction and engineering firms is responsible for rebuilding horizontal infrastructure such as roads and freshwater, wastewater and stormwater networks.

Anchors away

Construction is under way on numerous anchor projects, such as the Bus Interchange and Justice and Emergency Services Precinct. Planning and design work continues on the Earthquake Memorial and the Christchurch Convention Centre Precinct.



Architect's concept image of the Christchurch Convention Centre Precinct.

IMAGE - COURTESY OF PLENARY CONVENTIONS NEW ZEALAND

Cricket oval

The Cricket Oval at Hagley Park is the first anchor project to be completed. The new cricket pitch and pavilion project, led by the CCC and Canterbury Cricket Trust, will be seen on the world stage in February when Christchurch hosts several ICC Cricket World Cup matches.

Bus Interchange

Work on the new Bus Interchange - a 14,000 m² block bound by Tuam, Colombo and Lichfield Streets - began in June 2014 and is due to be operational by mid-2015.

Australian construction firm Thiess partnered with Christchurch's Southbase Construction in a joint venture to deliver this project.

The Bus Interchange will have 16 bus bays, indoor waiting areas, a covered lock-up bicycle facility, secure public lockers, several allocated stops for regional bus lines in Lichfield Street and nearby taxi ranks.

Justice and Emergency Services Precinct

Work on the Justice and Emergency Services Precinct started in July and is earmarked for completion by December 2016. This will house the Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Department of Corrections, St John New Zealand, New Zealand Fire Service, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, Canterbury Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group and the Christchurch City Council Civil Defence and Emergency Management.

More than 2,000 people will work in or attend the 40,000 m²

precinct on a daily basis. It will comprise three buildings with 19 courtrooms and the Emergency Operations Centre.

Built by Fletcher Construction, the precinct will have the latest seismic technologies with seismic resilience incorporated into the design and construction of the buildings. It will also have its own emergency power, water and waste disposal systems.

Avon River Precinct

As part of the master plan for Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct, extensive work to transform the river surrounds into an exciting new social destination has started and will continue until mid-2016.

The area will have terraced seating, rain gardens, grassed areas, plants and a new paved promenade along the 3.2 km precinct, from the Antigua Boat Sheds to the Fitzgerald Avenue bridge.

Fletcher Construction started the first phase of work on The Terraces, along Oxford Terrace between Cashel and Hereford Streets, in October 2014 with completion due in May.

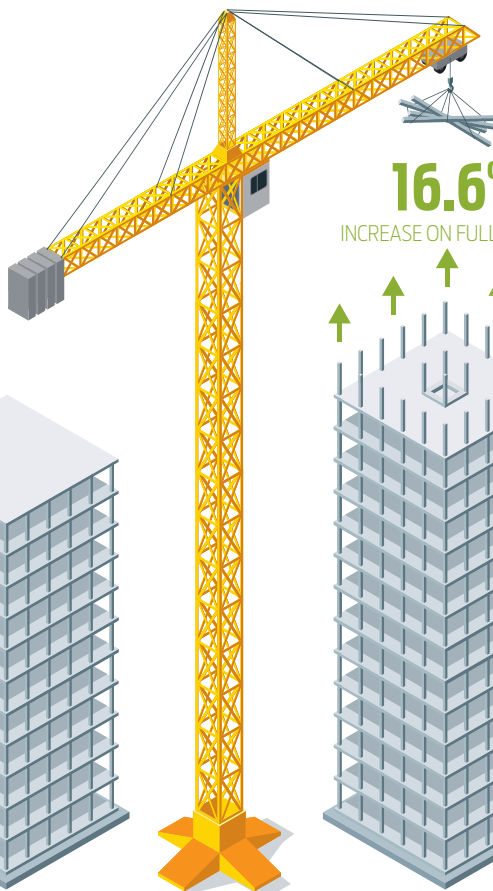
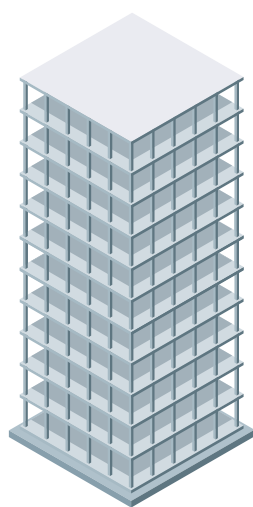
Work by CCDU, CCC and Downer to reposition the tram tracks along the river began in August and is now finished.

Clearing works have also started on the Margaret Mahy Family Playground, named in honour of the late New Zealand children's author. This is due to be opened in mid-2015. Located over 1 hectare between Manchester, Madras and Armagh Streets and Oxford Terrace, the remaining land will be used as a family park, including a café, amenities block and community garden. The main works contractor will be appointed early in 2015. ➤

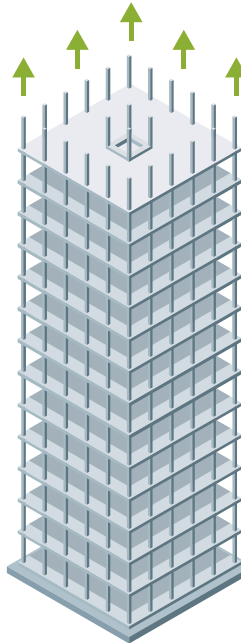
CHRISTCHURCH BUILDING CONSENTS CLIMBING

2013
YEAR TO END

7,737
BUILDING
CONSENTS
\$1.73bn



16.6%
INCREASE ON FULL YEAR



2014
YEAR TO 30 NOVEMBER

9,022
BUILDING
CONSENTS
\$2.60bn



Innovation Precinct

The Innovation Precinct, led by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, is designed to group innovative private sector companies in one area. It will sit across three city blocks bordered by Manchester, St Asaph, Lichfield and Madras Streets.

Telecommunications company Vodafone has started construction on their head office in the precinct, while outdoor goods specialist Kathmandu is expected to begin this year.

Retail Precinct

Already taking shape is the Retail Precinct, which will be located on the blocks bound by High, Hereford and Lichfield Streets and Oxford Terrace.

This precinct is led by the private sector and will have a mix of uses, including commercial, hospitality, retail and residential. The Crown is helping to facilitate development in the precinct.

The Crown is coordinating the developments and the public realm connecting pedestrians to other anchor projects. The private sector is building the various commercial, hospitality, retail and residential projects.

Future opportunities

While a number of anchor projects are already under construction,

some are still in various stages of consultation, negotiation, planning and design.

East Frame

One of the largest and most exciting is the East Frame Residential Precinct.

Once completed, it will cover 14.7 ha and include a large central park and 7.74 ha of a residential neighbourhood with a future population of more than 2,000 people.

Proposals from the four shortlisted developers to deliver the new neighbourhood in the heart of the city are currently being evaluated. The first homes are expected to be available by the end of 2016.

Canterbury Earthquake Memorial

The Canterbury Earthquake Memorial will be built to honour the 185 people who died, as well as those who were seriously injured, during the 2011 earthquake.

It is currently going through the design stage and will be built along the Ōtākaro/Avon River, between the Montreal Street bridge and Rhododendron Island.

The final shortlisted designs will be announced in early 2015 for public feedback, with construction expected to start in mid-2015.

Christchurch Convention Centre Precinct

The Crown is currently undergoing a master planning and development phase for the Christchurch Convention Centre Precinct with



Final pour on the Justice and Emergency Services Precinct.

PHOTOGRAPH – COURTESY OF MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

the preferred development group and operator. The preferred development group, Plenary Conventions New Zealand, is a consortium of proven international infrastructure firm Plenary Group with local firms Ngāi Tahu Property and Carter Group. The preferred operator is international convention centre and hotel operator Accor.

Once finalised, early work, including ground preparation for building, is expected to start in mid-2015 with a staged completion in 2017.

Performing Arts Precinct

Building on the successful delivery of the repaired Isaac Theatre Royal which reopened on 17 November 2014, construction works will start early this year in the Performing Arts Precinct with the Music Centre of Christchurch's new facility.

This project is being jointly led and delivered by the Crown and the Christchurch City Council.

And more...

Projects such as the Health Precinct, The Square, Metro Sports Facility, Central Library and South Frame (public realm) are still being developed but are expected to commence construction works in 2015. They will present the private sector with opportunities to combine efficient, innovative and sustainable construction and design and also entice further development in the city.

Work on the Residential Demonstration Project is still at the negotiation phase, while the design phase for the stadium is not expected to commence until some time in 2015.

Construction activity everywhere

Apart from Crown and CCC work on anchor projects, there are many local and international developers and businesses involved in rebuilding Christchurch by purchasing, constructing or refurbishing property in the central city.

Building figures compiled by Christchurch City Council show that, during the calendar year, as at 30 November 2014, there were 9,022 building consents - totalling \$2.6 billion - issued in Christchurch city.

This is a 16.6% increase on the 2013 year-to-end statistics (to 31 December 2013), when 7,737 building consents were issued in Christchurch with a total value of \$1,733,875,772.

This upturn in the number of consents is a good indication of how keen new and returning businesses are to make the central city their home base.

All of this construction and planned development adds an exciting vibe to the city as it is revitalised and rejuvenated for a brighter future for both Christchurch residents and its many visitors. ◀