ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

‘Kia atawhai ki te tangata.’
Pita Te Hori (1861)

June 2015
“It is an area where we recognise where we are, take a deep breath and smile, and rest our broken Hearts.”

“Leave the trees as they are. DO NOT change the layout. (Keep) all the water features including fountains.”

1 Respondents’ comments from Victoria Square public participation process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victoria Square as it exists today is highly valued. Keeping the core design, that includes the recognisable landscape characteristics and sense of place it provides the people of Christchurch, is of the utmost importance.

Recent community public participation and feedback has provided results that have guided the development of this Victoria Square Draft Restoration Plan. The process has been undertaken in collaboration with strategic project partners, Christchurch City Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority.

Development of the concept design principles and objectives have undergone discussion and review with the Victoria Square Community Reference Group and representatives from strategic project partner organisations. These discussions have been supportive of the overarching principles and their relationship to the overall Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct project.

The formation of the design objectives are based on public feedback. They have guided and informed the proposed draft future design outcomes. Priorities were to retain Victoria Square’s natural green environment, with an emphasis on relaxing and enjoying it with friends and whānau; provide pedestrian access to and from the city; and acknowledge the past with a balanced and visible representation of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

There was also moderate support for some community events and festivals, especially those that have been held in the past, as well as temporary art and performances. There was limited support for uses that were commercial in nature, such as markets or cafés. Other design priorities include achieving accessibility requirements, safety standards, and managing current and future asset conditions within Victoria Square.

The result of the community public participation process is this Victoria Square Draft Restoration Plan. It supports community desires to retain existing character and features, integrate new elements, make appropriate repairs, and build upon existing themes and the vision for shared cultural histories.

1 Respondents’ comments from Victoria Square public participation process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .............................................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction and Purpose .................................................................................................................................. 2
Design Process ...................................................................................................................................................... 3
Design Principles and Objectives .................................................................................................................... 4
Victoria Square Existing Context .................................................................................................................... 6
What Will the Victoria Square Draft Restoration Plan Deliver? ............................................................. 8
Asset Condition ....................................................................................................................................................13
Shared Heritage and Looking Forward ........................................................................................................14
Draft Restoration Plan ........................................................................................................................................15
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This document and its contents provide an overview of the draft concept design process. It illustrates how the recent public participation and feedback, undertaken in collaboration with strategic project partners Christchurch City Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, has provided results that have guided the development of a draft restoration plan for Victoria Square.

The following pages outline concept design principles and objectives, how they relate to the draft restoration plan for Victoria Square and their connection to Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct. The objectives are underpinned by an understanding of the public feedback and desires, current asset condition and operational requirements, and the role of Victoria Square within our recovering city.

During this draft concept phase, important consideration has been given to Victoria Square’s context and the future relationships and connections to surrounding places. Also, Victoria Square is noted as a key destination within Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct - seen as the jewel in the crown. Many of the design concepts are already present in Victoria Square as it stands today.

This concept phase of the project is about understanding ways to ensure that, as the years pass and the city changes, Victoria Square continues to be the jewel in the crown.
The design process embodies the community feedback and key messages of retaining, repairing, refreshing and maintaining Victoria Square.

This direct community feedback, combined with input from the Victoria Square Community Reference Group, has helped form the design objectives. These design objectives in turn have informed the combined strategic partner working group that has developed the draft restoration plan outlined in this document.

It is important to recognise that, while considering key community messages, the design process must also understand and consider other factors that will ensure Victoria Square remains both visually and physically of a high quality in future years.

These factors include actual post-earthquake asset condition throughout Victoria Square; the cost of on-going remedial maintenance to earthquake-damaged areas; and how Victoria Square will sit within the surrounding context such as the refurbished Town Hall and Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct.

The design process investigates and reviews current levels of safety, accessibility requirements and standards that are required today within premier public places like Victoria Square.

Victoria Square Community Reference Group

These factors include actual post-earthquake asset condition throughout Victoria Square, the cost of on-going remedial maintenance to earthquake-damaged areas, and how Victoria Square will sit within the surrounding context such as the refurbished Town Hall and Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct.

The design process investigates and reviews current levels of safety, accessibility requirements and standards that are required today within premier public places like Victoria Square.

\(^2\) CPTED - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES
‘KIA ATAWHAI KI TE TANGATA’ Care for the People

Detailed below are the key design principles and the associated framework of design actions and outcomes that relate to the Victoria Square Draft Restoration Plan. The overarching principles also relate to Te Papa Ītākaro/Avon River Precinct project.

A HEALTHY PLACE – A HEALTHY RIVER

- To ensure adequate lighting that makes the space safe and meets Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards.
- To ensure dead and diseased trees are removed and replaced.
- To maximise the space as an area for relaxation and meeting friends and whānau, for example by including lots of tranquil grassy spots.

DESIGN ACTIONS
- CPTED review.
- Accessibility review.
- Youth audit.
- Review existing trees.
- Review existing grassed areas.
- Review existing maintenance issues.

DRAFT DESIGN OUTCOMES
- Retain and maintain all existing trees within Victoria Square.
- Improved pathway and feature lighting that preserves the existing character of Victoria Square while making the space safer.
- Improved lawn drainage to enhance public use of grassed areas.
- Furniture that encourages relaxation and social meetings with friends and whānau, for example riverside picnic benches and tables.

A DISTINCTIVE PLACE

- To retain and enhance curved paths, edges, hills and sinuous lines.
- To retain and maintain landscape character of grassed areas, trees and flowering garden beds.
- To retain and refresh existing features within Victoria Square, such as the Queen Victoria Statue, Captain Cook Statue, Bowker Fountain, Horse Watering Ramp, Floral Clock and remembrance plaques.
- To identify and repair all damaged structures and elements.
- To retain and refresh existing features within Victoria Square, such as the Queen Victoria Statue, Captain Cook Statue, Bowker Fountain, Horse Watering Ramp, Floral Clock and remembrance plaques.

DESIGN ACTIONS
- Review and assess material and asset condition of all elements in Victoria Square.
- Review the context of future surrounding developments, for example Convention Centre, Te Papa Ītākaro/Avon River Precinct promenade, Town Hall and private development sites.
- Undertake cultural audit.
- Collaborate with Ngāi Tūāhuriri to identify narratives and locations to integrate standalone elements.
- Review directional and information signs, and plaques.
- Review reconstruction requirements for the Bowker Fountain in its current location.
- Review existing geometry and spatial qualities.

DRAFT DESIGN OUTCOMES
- Retain and maintain visual qualities and character of trees, lawn area and flower beds.
- Incorporate improved interpretative and information signs for local residents and visitors.
- Reduce future running costs, repairs and maintenance by using refreshed materials, for example new paving, lighting, furniture and drainage.
- All existing statues remain in existing locations and are maintained.
- Standalone elements near Queen Victoria Statue to incorporate Ngāi Tahu narratives, for example the low wall and plant bed structures.
**Additional design objectives**

All elements need to meet current standards and compliance codes: furniture, paving, lighting, walls, tree canopy management, heritage elements and structures, event infrastructure, accessibility and safety.

Any concept design to be audited in terms of CPTED, accessibility and road safety.
VICTORIA SQUARE EXISTING CONTEXT

Context Diagrams

Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct has been developed around design concepts that have guided the development of spaces and connections along the Precinct’s 3.2km length. Victoria Square is a key space within the Precinct and the wider city context – the jewel in the crown. Many of the design concepts are already present in Victoria Square as it stands today.

The following context diagrams illustrate Victoria Square’s position within the central city and the important relationship and connections with Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct.

LEGEND

Context Diagrams
CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

Building on Existing Identity
The Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct will be sensitively retro-fitted into the existing river corridor.

Design Concepts - ‘Character and Heritage’

- Maintaining the ‘park like qualities of the river, river bank and landscape.
- Revealing and amplifying the landscape setting of key heritage and character structures and buildings.
- Associated plantings of significant and noble trees.

RIVER JOURNEYS

- Providing new pedestrian and cycle bridges which support ‘in river journeys’ through the enhanced provision of waters edge access and punting platforms.
- Establishing the first stage of the ‘urban connector’ which will improve the accessibility and legibility of the river corridor.
- Revealing a rivers edge ‘walk’ which follows the alignment and topography of the river.
- Providing a dedicated cycle path through the Precinct.
- Revealing through way-finding and interpretation the topography of the river.
- Enhancing the ‘left bank’ walk to provide a low key and passive experience.

LEGEND

- Ōtākaro/Avon River
- Bridges
- Key Heritage Elements

Existing Plan

This aerial plan view illustrates the existing Victoria Square layout and its immediate surrounding future context.

LEGEND

- Ōtākaro/Avon River
- Bridges
- The Promenade
- Urban and City, high quality/stone
- The River Walk
- Follows river alignment/topography/movement
- The Left Bank
- Meandering river walk, passive and calm
- The Cycle Path
- Cycle infrastructure and City access
- The ‘Urban Connector’
- Connections through the East Frame create a unified City Centre loop
WHAT WILL THE VICTORIA SQUARE DRAFT RESTORATION PLAN DELIVER?

Overall, the draft restoration plan prioritises Christchurch’s community feedback highlighted during the public feedback phase.

The priority values include:

- retaining the enjoyment of the current environment
- acknowledging the past
- provision of good pedestrian access to and from the square
- ensuring that activities such as meeting friends and whānau, and relaxation are key to Victoria Square’s future.

The following diagrams illustrate how the community values are being retained, refreshed and/or restored.

“...A valuable part of our memory is the way a relatively informal green space in the centre of Christchurch was used by people working in the CBD and visitors...”
The existing heritage elements are retained, repaired and maintained in their current locations. This includes the Hamish Hay Bridge, Queen Victoria Statue, Captain Cook Statue, Horse Watering Ramp and repaired Bowker Fountain.

“I like its green space, its fountain and statues.”

Existing trees are all retained within Victoria Square. This supports the importance the trees provide to the character and sense of place for Victoria Square.

“Victoria Square is special as an island of grass, trees and gardens, opening to the river.”

There will be areas for social meetings and activities. The areas remain consistent with the layout and use of the square in the past, with some integrated furniture elements and supporting infrastructure, for example a power box to support the Chinese Lantern Festival.

“More seating along the banks of the river - especially for older folks like me who struggle to sit on the ground.”
Refreshed Qualities

CONNECTIONS

This diagram illustrates key connection points and routes to and through Victoria Square. These consider the importance of linking Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct’s promenade with Victoria Square’s pedestrian and cycle routes. Also re-establishing the connection with Victoria Street.

“I like the fact it has pathways leading through to other roads.”

NGĀI TAHU

This diagram illustrates elements and areas to define and deliver a balanced representation of the Treaty of Waitangi partnership and manaakitanga within Victoria Square, while retaining the character of the existing Square. These elements include tīpuna dedications for new plantings, new standalone features, Te Reo naming of elements and distinctive design of new utilitarian elements.

“More acknowledgment of tangata whenua presence and acknowledgment of the earlier history.”

SAFETY

This image illustrates the safe place Victoria Square will provide for families and whānau for all ages and abilities. The design will deliver safety in terms people walking and connecting with the river, while ensuring good visibility around Victoria Square is consistent during both day and night.

ASSET CONDITIONS

This image illustrates an example of the visible and obvious paving damage from lateral movement due to past earthquakes. Behind the visible damage lies additional structural damage that will be repaired as part of the proposed work to Victoria Square.
How Do We Achieve the Desired Qualities?

CONNECTIONS TO SURROUNDINGS

Having well-connected pedestrian and cycle routes helps locals and visitors move through the city in an easy, relaxed fashion. Victoria Square’s surroundings have changed and this provides great opportunities to get more people moving through Victoria Square. These changes include the creation of a promenade that connects the city and river, and the North Frame that connects Victoria Square with the historic Edmonds Band Rotunda and the Margaret Mahy Family Playground. Perhaps the biggest change for Victoria Square’s surrounds is the loss of the Crowne Plaza. This provides the opportunity to restore the pedestrian connection over the Hamish Hay Bridge to Victoria Street and beyond.

CONNECTIONS TO WATER

“...I like the green space and access to the river.”

Previously being a mahinga kai (food gathering) area, access to the river has been a feature of this place since before European settlement. Access to the water continues to be a beloved feature of Victoria Square, whether it be the historic Horse Watering Ramp that leads people into the water, or the gentle grassed banks that provide dry access to the water’s edge. Public feedback has been supportive of the addition of a punt/waka stop and the draft Restoration Plan will provide this. This will also be useful for kayakers wanting to park and enjoy Victoria Square.

SUITABLE ROUTES

“...think of those with disability...”

It is important that pedestrians and cyclists have safe and suitably sized routes through Victoria Square. This project will improve the space provided for pedestrians and cyclists and will ensure that where steps or ramps are required they are designed and built to meet and exceed current national standards. This ensures that Victoria Square can be enjoyed by all, regardless of age or ability.
“Include some decorative lighting at night to highlight shadows from trees and include special lighting effects with the Bowker Fountain as previously.”

“Extra lighting maybe a good thing but it should be kept soft, not harsh lighting.”

The current path and area lighting has a soft and warm quality, which complements the soft and green nature of the space. This project proposes to retain these lighting qualities in the upgraded lighting design, while providing tasteful and respectful feature lighting for key monuments in the space, such as the Queen Victoria and Captain Cook statues. Restoration of the Bowker Fountain will include a lighting system capable of producing the colourful effects the fountain was once well-known for.

Victoria Square is a place for all, regardless of age or ability. It must be safe and accessible, and must meet or exceed national standards such as the Building Code. In order to achieve this, the project will look to enhance areas that do not currently provide equal access for all.

“Victoria Square is special as an island of grass, trees and gardens, opening to the river.”

Victoria Square is highly prized as a green oasis in the central city, with features such as trees, flower beds and lawns. This project will retain these much-loved features.

In addition, maintenance such as tree pruning will be undertaken to ensure that people can see clearly across Victoria Square, minimising places for undesirable activity. This will help to ensure that Victoria Square is a safe place for all, day and night.
As part of the review and design process, a preliminary but focused site condition assessment has been undertaken. This assessment, and associated asset review discussions within the strategic partner working group, considered current asset conditions; general wear and tear; earthquake-related damage; completed repair work; post-earthquake maintenance regimes; broken and non-functioning assets; and the ability to continue maintaining damaged and older assets in the future.

This process has been essential to understand the actual condition of current materials, assets and structures that will require on-going repair or are refreshed as part of the draft restoration plan.

This information was presented and discussed with the Victoria Square Community Reference Group. The group then took an on-site walk with Christchurch City Council asset experts. This helped reference group members understand the unseen technical aspects that need to be considered as part of any future work to Victoria Square.

The draft site condition assessment plan (right) illustrates areas that have been identified as damaged, have received temporary repairs or are old assets.

These images illustrate some of Victoria Square’s site and asset issues.
**SHARED HERITAGE AND LOOKING FORWARD**

‘Kia atawhai ki te tangata’
Care for the People.
(Pita Te Hori, 1861)

“It holds a fond memory of candle light services for our families and others. It is a place my grandfather used to take his horse to cool off. My mother and I enjoyed the floral festivals. I appreciate it is a significant place for Māori and was their market place and that is a part of Christchurch.”

“The square needs to incorporate a history of Christchurch starting with Māori history and going forward.”

“Statues, bridge and fountain give character and remind of past.”

“The square represents a peaceful, reflective, therapeutic environment to chill out in. It is a tranquil meeting place for family and friends.”

These quotes are examples of public feedback that demonstrate the views of the Christchurch people. There is a strong element of retaining Victoria Square as it was in the past, including historical features, fountains, statues and the natural landscape. There are also suggested changes which could be incorporated whilst maintaining the green and relaxing environment. These elements have been highlighted within the proposed draft Restoration Plan.

Based on feedback received from the community during the Stage 1 survey, additional suggested features were identified including the need for representation of Māori culture.

Ngāi Tahu respects community feedback to retain the existing tranquil, contemplative character of the square while continuing to work together to build a shared history for the future Victoria Square.

Ngāi Tahu

**KEY FOR THE DRAFT RESTORATION PLAN**

1. Queen Victoria Statue − to be retained in place
2. Bowker Fountain  − To be restored to its former glory, including feature lighting.
3. Captain Cook Statue − to be retained in place
4. Floral Clock − to be retained in place
5. Victoria Street connection
   Safe and accessible pedestrian and cycle route to be provided between the Hamish Hay Bridge and Victoria Street.
6. Art Trail installations
   Artworks to be integrated into Victoria Square in a sympathetic manner.
7. Proposed punt/waka stop
   Provides the public with easy access to the Ōtākaro/Aven River, as well as creating opportunity for a new stopping point along the punt route.
8. Hamish Hay Bridge
   Repair and restoration work to be undertaken by SCIHT.
9. Horse Watering Ramp − to be retained in place
   Minor earthquake repairs may be required.
10. Mast − to be retained in place
    More frequent use is encouraged.
11. Heritage phone box − to be retained in place
12. Tram stop − to be retained in place
13. Ramps and steps
    To be brought up to current national standards, ensuring safe routes and access for all.
14. Flagpoles − to be retained in place
15. Connection to North Frame
   Provision of more direct route to the new North Frame, including signalised crossings on Colombo Street for pedestrians and cyclists.
16. Connection to promenade
   Provision of more direct route to the new promenade along the river, including a signalised crossing on Armagh Street for pedestrians and cyclists.
17. Cycleway route
   Shared path along which the city-wide cycle trail passes.
18. Vanilla Ice parking and seating space
   Provision for van parking and space for tables and chairs.
19. Discourage anti-social behaviour in planted areas
   Removal of paths and lighting through planted areas to discourage movement and gathering in this place, improving safety.
20. Improve drainage on grassed areas
   To improve usability.
21. Shared heritage opportunity
   Installation of narratives to reflect the relationship and shared heritage between the Crown and Ngāi Tahu.
22. Widening of existing path
   To improve safety and access for all.
23. Streetscape improvements − Armagh Street
   Improved pedestrian facilities both sides of the street and creation of a 30kmh vehicle speed environment, in keeping with the city’s central core speed limit.
   A pedestrian crossing connects people safely with the new promenade. The tram will continue to travel along Armagh Street on its existing route. Gardens and street trees will extend the planting character of Victoria Square across the street, helping to connect it with the street.
24. Streetscape improvements − Colombo Street
   Improved pedestrian facilities both sides of the street and creation of a 30kmh vehicle speed environment, in keeping with the city’s central core speed limit.
   A shared pedestrian/cycle path along the edge of Victoria Square will allow safe movement for all, linking to signalised crossings connecting people to the North Frame. Gardens and street trees will extend the planting character of Victoria Square across the street, helping to connect it with the street.
25. Re-establish the former amphitheatre beside the Floral Clock, upgrading so it integrates with the Town Hall’s new proposed forecourt.