

To: the Finance and Expenditure Committee, NZ Parliament  
From: Ross Gray, Board Member, Christchurch Civic Trust

## **“PROTECT OUR REMAINING HERITAGE: STOP THE DESTRUCTION”**

Ross Gray, Associate Professor Dr Ian Lochhead and Dr Lynne Lochhead will speak in support of this petition. We represent:

Christchurch Civic Trust, established in 1965 as an organisation dedicated to protecting and improving the natural and built environments of Christchurch;

IConIC (Interests in Conserving the Identity of Christchurch) formed immediately after 22 February 2011 as a public interest group with the aim of advocating for retention of the architectural heritage of Christchurch;

HPC (Historic Places Canterbury), incorporated 3 February 2012 as successor organisation to the local NZHPT branch committee.

<h3>A. Why “PROTECT OUR REMAINING HERITAGE: STOP THE DESTRUCTION”?</h3>
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*Since February 2011 there has been unprecedented and unceasing demolition of Christchurch listed heritage buildings: at least 220 to date.*

1. February - March 2011: in the first two months after the disaster, Civil Defence authorised demolition of 93 heritage buildings, a great number of them without due regard to any heritage recovery process.
2. March 2011: delegation of IConIC to Civil Defence Controller, John Hamilton, with aim of ensuring owners notified of impending demolition. (Demolition without notice of a building owned by one of the delegates occurred the next day!)
3. Further delegation to Warwick Isaacs, Civil Defence.
4. Early March 2011: NZHPT identified key listed buildings to try to save. IConIC list of essential heritage buildings presented to Hon. Gerry Brownlee - described by him as not unreasonable.
5. 19 April 2011: Cer Act comes into effect.
6. Commencing in April: IConIC seeks delegation to Cera to discuss urgent building owner access to CBD: all attempts rebuffed.

7. 9 May 2011: IConIC Forum on built fabric of Christchurch.
8. 14 May 2011: heritage presentation to CCC Share an Idea Expo.
9. June 2011: High St Precinct Group formed - push to save this historic area. (No decision has yet been made by CCDU on this block of heritage buildings.)
10. 9 July 2011: IConIC delegation to Hon. Chris Finlayson, Minister of Culture and Heritage requesting action from Ministry to halt demolition of heritage buildings.
11. 22 July 2011: IConIC written submission on Cera Draft Recovery Plan emphasising the importance of heritage retention to the recovery.
12. 27-28 August 2011: internationally recognised seismic engineer Dr Kit Miyamoto speaks out against unprecedented post-earthquake heritage loss.
13. 21 September 2011: IConIC meeting with Hon. Gerry Brownlee to discuss heritage issues. Minister dismissed any governmental role in defending the public interest represented by heritage listing.
14. By October 2011: Demolition of Warners Hotel increased calls for combined public voice to stop the continuing heritage demolitions.
15. 7 November 2011: Stop Heritage Destruction Rally held to protest against the refusal of Civil Defence, then Cera and the minister to engage with heritage advocates. Launch of petition:  
**PROTECT OUR REMAINING HERITAGE: STOP THE DESTRUCTION** March by some attendees to Cera HQ to try to speak to Roger Sutton.
16. Mid November 2011: online version of the petition created on change.org
17. December 2011: MCH Draft Heritage Recovery Policy Statement circulated to a limited number of recipients for comment.

<b>B. What happened following the launch of the petition?</b>
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*Further heritage support rallies and forums occurred during 2012, well attended and generating considerable strength of public feeling.*

18. Early March 2012: Cathedral Square opened at weekends to allow "last view of the cathedral". Many sign petition and are extremely surprised that the building is largely intact.

19. 19 March 2012: heritage forum, VALUING CHRISTCHURCH'S PAST FOR OUR FUTURE at Cashmere Presbyterian Church. (This building was saved from Cera demolition through intervention of Mike King, structural engineer from Miyamoto International. The repairs cost \$90,000.)
20. 21 -23 April 2012: protests at Anglican Synod and Canterbury Museum over impending Christ Church Cathedral demolition. Wizard of NZ leads protest Demo against Demo.
21. 27 April 2012: deputations meet Bishop Matthews and Church Property Trustees. Offers of help made by heritage advocates from HPC, IConIC, Civic Trust and Restore Christ Church Cathedral.
22. 10 May 2012: release of draft MCH Recovery Programme for Heritage Buildings. (To date it is still only in draft form!)
23. 17 May 2012: public meeting on the future of Christ Church Cathedral at Ng Gallery.
24. 26 May 2012: rally of more than 4000 in support of the restoration of Christ Church Cathedral held in Cranmer Square.
25. 24 June 2012: media release by Civic Trust, IConIC and HPC on the demolition of the former Christchurch Railway Station. Cera reveals that s.38 had been used "numerous times in the past year" to demolish non-dangerous buildings. CCC apparently unaware of this.
26. 19 July 2012: meeting of HPC, Civic Trust and IConIC representatives with Cera CEO Roger Sutton to discuss urgent heritage issues. Presentation of open letter inscribed on 15kg stone tablet signed by heads of sixteen Christchurch heritage groups and the Wizard of New Zealand Ltd. (Subsequent attempt to meet Hon. Gerry Brownlee to present stone tablet to him and discuss heritage matters rebuffed.)
27. 30 July 2012: release of the CCDU Blueprint. Civic Trust, HPC and IConIC produce media release urging a halt to demolition of viable heritage buildings in Green Frame - and also other existing building stock likely to be demolished.
28. 6 September 2012: Save the Cathedral public meeting at Cashmere Presbyterian Church - standing room only.
29. 10 September 2012: heritage groups' representatives meeting with Nicky Wagner.

30. 2 October 2012: Forum focusing on Heritage and the CCDU Blueprint held at Ng Gallery building (under threat from CCDU Blueprint) - overshadowed by resumption of demolition of Cranmer Courts the next day.
31. Throughout October on-site protest at destruction of Cranmer Courts.
32. 11 October 2012: Council passes resolution asking Cera to halt demolition of Cranmer Courts for 30 days and delivers resolution to Cera. Request goes unheeded.
33. 11 October 2012: Heritage Roll of Honour- 101 demolished heritage buildings delivered at Christchurch Civic Trust Annual Awards function.
34. 12 November 2012: first restore democracy rally - heritage one of three key issues.
35. 1 December 2012: focus on the importance of retention of heritage one component of the RALLY FOR DEMOCRACY: OUR CITY, OUR SAY. Around 2000 people march from Latimer Square to Cranmer Square as part of the protest.
36. 24 May 2013: public gathering in Peter Scoular Park, Tuam St, to hand over PROTECT OUR REMAINING HERITAGE: STOP THE DESTRUCTION Petition to MPs Eugenie Sage and Lianne Dalziel to take to Parliament. Open letter stone tablet addressed to Prime Minister John Key also presented.
37. 29 June 2013: People's Voice meeting with heritage as a key issue. HPC and IConIC represented.

## C. What is the extent of heritage demolition in Christchurch?

1. Since 4 September 2010 Christchurch has experienced post-earthquake demolition of heritage buildings to an extent unprecedented in the world. More than 40% of Christchurch's CBD listed heritage has been demolished.
2. In November 2011, NZHPT publicly drew attention to 27 heritage buildings, including NZHPT Category 1 and CCC Group 1, which had been demolished contrary to NZHPT / CCC recommendations which were backed by engineers' reports. This number has increased since then with demolitions of Cranmer Courts, former Christchurch Railway Station and Cracroft House. Cera has had no dialogue with CCC over its Group 3 and 4 listed heritage buildings.

## The full inventory of demolished Christchurch heritage buildings:

<http://canterburyearthquakedemolist.weebly.com/>

### D. Which heritage buildings are we still concerned about?

1. With the emergency now long past, any chance of input into heritage demolition decisions is still being denied the public. A number of important heritage buildings are to be demolished because they are in the CCDU Blueprint Frame or are in the way of one of the planned precincts or anchor projects. There has been no public consultation on CCDU plans for the city rebuild.

**Former Millers/Civic Offices building**  
**Majestic Theatre**  
**Odeon Theatre façade**  
**Lawrie and Wilson building**  
**Hutchinson Ford Motors building**  
**Pegasus Press**

**Christ Church Cathedral:** the future of this key Christchurch icon continues to be of world-wide concern. Lifting of the s.38 (dangerous building) provision would enable a rational way forward!

**Westende Building:** the CCDU has purchased this building for demolition as part of the East Frame. The building was constructed following the 22 February 2011 earthquake to 135% of the new building code. The decision to demolish this brand new building exemplifies the profligacy of the CCDU Recovery Plan.

2. Cera continues to provide s.38 notices for owners who wish to demolish non-dangerous heritage buildings. The recent issuing of s38 on the NZHPT Cat.1 / CCC Group 1 McLean's Mansion, one of New Zealand's largest timber heritage houses, was met with widespread public outrage - and many offers of assistance to save this building.

### E. What would we like the Expenditure and Finance Committee to do?

***We are requesting the committee to recommend that the government instructs Cera and CCDU to halt all demolition of heritage buildings because:***

1. **There is still no MCH Heritage Recovery Programme:** 30 months after the 22 February catastrophe there is still no set of principles by which Cera can manage the future of damaged Christchurch heritage buildings in an informed way. The MCH-led Heritage Recovery Programme remains no more than a scoping and discussion document, originally scheduled for delivery in October 2011. The heritage which it is intended to manage has in large part been demolished! More than 40% of Christchurch's CBD heritage has been demolished.
2. **The CCDU Christchurch Central Recovery Plan takes no cognisance of remaining heritage:** Christchurch has lost a vast number of its world renowned heritage buildings (which may or may not have posed a risk to public safety), but Cera / CCDU is intent on sacrificing precious remaining heritage buildings for the inflexible precinct-based "new" city.
3. **We request that Parliament take all steps necessary to ensure that destruction of heritage on the scale that occurred in Christchurch following the earthquakes of 2011 never happens again in New Zealand following a natural disaster. This could be greatly assisted by the development of a comprehensive national Heritage Recovery Plan.**

We thank you for this opportunity to speak to the petition,  
PROTECT OUR REMAINING HERITAGE: STOP THE DESTRUCTION.

Ross Gray  
Dr Ian Lochhead  
Dr Lynne Lochhead

### **Additional oral presentations**

Economic reasons for saving heritage (listed and unlisted)

- International studies on the economics of heritage restoration and the adaptive reuse of buildings show that it creates more jobs and contributes more to the economy than new construction. Heritage restoration is characterised by labour intensity as opposed to material intensity for new construction – numerous studies showing it creates more jobs both direct and indirect than new construction
- International experience shows that city revitalization seldom succeeds where heritage is destroyed. Heritage provides a point of difference, attracts entrepreneurs as well as small businesses. A range of buildings of diverse sizes, ages and characters provides the mix of rental structures that attracts the

wide variety of interdependent commercial operations that characterise successful urban centres. Heritage buildings are an essential part of this mix they are natural incubators for small business because usually relatively affordable

- Retaining and reusing existing built stock reduces our carbon footprint and extends the economic life of buildings. eg Donovan Rypkema international expert on the economics of heritage points out that demolishing a typical North America commercial building – 7.5 meters wide and 36 meters deep wipes out the entire environmental benefit from the last 1,344,000 aluminum cans that were recycled.. And that calculation only considers the impact on the landfill.

Razing historic buildings results in a triple hit on scarce resources.

- 1) loss of thousands of dollars of embodied energy.
- 2) replacing it with materials which generally consume vastly more energy
- 3) loss of the recurring embodied energy savings which increase dramatically as a building life stretches over fifty years.

What lessons can we take from Christchurch for the future to prevent further heritage destruction following natural disasters?

- Need for robust, readily accessible data on building structures, level of seismic code compliance and heritage status that can be immediately available to Civil Defence in emergency situations. (An online summary of key building data.) Ignorance should not be an excuse for heritage destruction.
- Need for first-response personnel with heritage knowledge; there are just not enough NZHPT and TLA heritage staff available so there needs to be a national register of people with the skills required to be drawn in to a disaster scenario for the triage phase of heritage recovery.

Civil Defence and USAR need to develop protocols to ensure an understanding of the need to respect heritage structures, and indeed, property in general. Untold, needless damage occurred in Christchurch as a result of gung-ho actions such as unlocked interior doors of heritage

buildings being smashed in because no one thought to turn a door handle. Building status notices were spray-canned onto stone walls when the same message could have been applied to painted wooden doors. Buildings with no major structural failures had backs torn off with diggers even though owners had already confirmed they had been evacuated. This further weakened buildings and made repairs more difficult.

- Ministry of Culture and Heritage needs a national heritage recovery plan template that can be adapted to specific post-disaster situations and brought into play within weeks, rather than have a repeat of the complete failure to deliver a timely plan as occurred in Canterbury.
- MCH or NZHPT needs to initiate a comprehensive, national photographic recording programme of all listed and potentially listable heritage buildings, along the lines of the National Monuments Record in the UK, set up in World War II as a result of the destruction of buildings during the Blitz. Current photographic records maintained by NZHPT are at the level of snapshots. Obtaining good quality photographs of some buildings demolished in Christchurch has proven to be difficult and in some cases almost impossible.

Some questions for committee members:

- Why does Parliament fund the heritage registration function of NZHPT if, when a disaster strikes and listed heritage buildings are damaged, little or no recognition is taken of heritage listings in the decision making process? What use is such a register if it is only a fair-weather list?
- Why does Parliament continue to fund the heritage function of MCH when, almost three years since the first Canterbury earthquake it has still not produced the Heritage Recovery Programme document it was tasked with?
- Why, when Parliament is making cuts and seeking efficiencies across the public sector, is a government department purchasing a brand new building constructed to a higher standard than the current seismic code, in order to demolish it?
- Why, when global warming is an internationally acknowledged threat to human survival, is Parliament taking no account of either the embodied energy represented by both heritage and other buildings, along with the carbon emissions associated with the unnecessary destruction of heritage and other buildings? E.g. Majestic Theatre and Town Hall, Westende Building.



- Why was funding for heritage recovery singled out to be conditional on identified, private contributions? No other sector has had funding ring-fenced in this way. Why was the Canterbury Earthquake Heritage Restoration Trust not provided with professional staff and properly managed to ensure that it was effective? Total government funding for heritage equals 1/1300<sup>th</sup> of the total of \$13 billion.

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