

# VICTORIA SQUARE RESTORATION PLAN

'Kia Atawhai ki te Tangata' - Care for the People



AVON RIVER  
PRECINCT  
TE PAPA  
ŌTĀKARO





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS-FRONT COVER

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

September 2015

PUB330.1509



*“It is an area where we recognise where we are, take a deep breath and smile, and rest our broken Hearts.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“Leave the trees as they are. DO NOT change the layout. (Keep) all the water features including fountains.”<sup>1</sup>*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Victoria Square is highly valued as it exists today. Keeping the award winning design from 1989, including the recognisable landscape characteristics and sense of place it provides the people of Christchurch, is of the utmost importance.

Recent public participation and community feedback provided insights that guided the development of this Victoria Square Restoration Plan. The process was 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 underwent discussion and review with the Victoria Square Community Reference Group and representatives from strategic project partner organisations. These discussions supported the overarching principles and their relationship to the overall Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct project.

The design objectives have been formed based on public feedback. They have guided and informed the design outcomes. The

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, and temporary art and performances. There was limited support for commercial uses, 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 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.

<sup>1</sup> Respondents’ comments from Victoria Square public participation process.



As it is today: Victoria Square

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## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This document and its contents provide an overview of the 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 restoration plan for Victoria Square.

The following pages outline concept design principles and objectives, how they relate to the 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 concept phase, important consideration was 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.

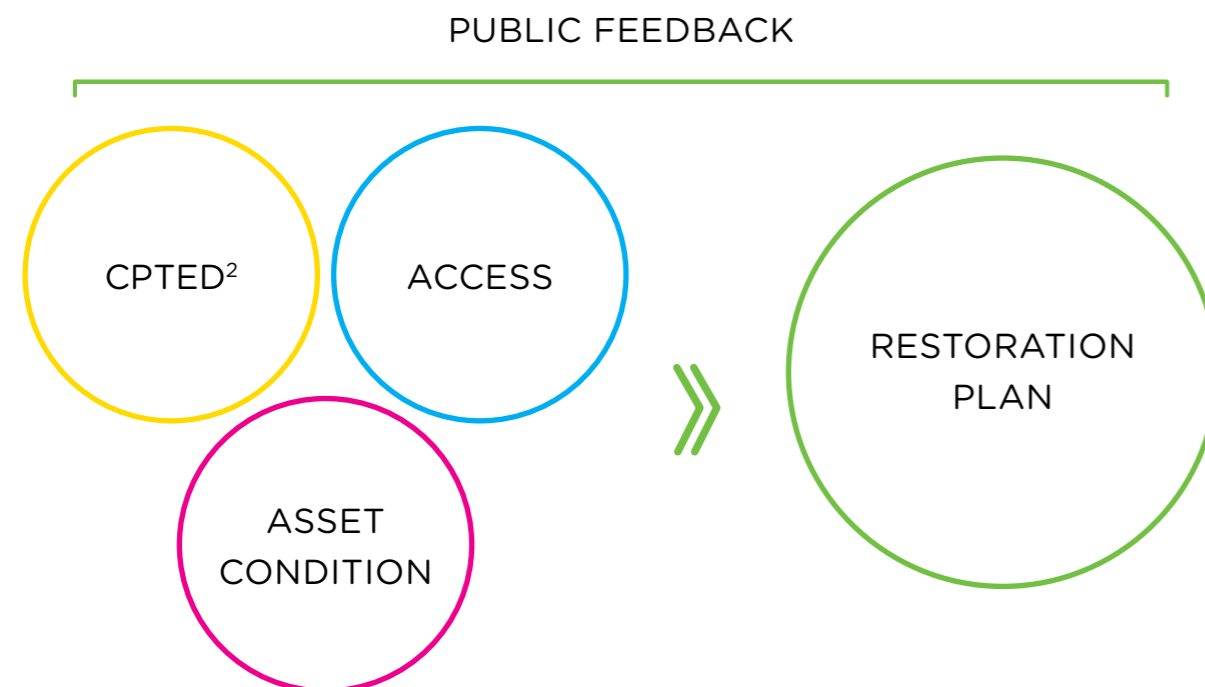


## DESIGN PROCESS

The design process embodied 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, helped form the design objectives. These design objectives informed the combined strategic partner working group that developed the restoration plan outlined in this document.

It is important to recognise that, while considering key community feedback, the design process understood and considered other factors ensuring Victoria Square remains both visually and physically of a high quality in future years.



**Victoria Square Community Reference Group**

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

The design process investigated and reviewed the levels of safety, accessibility requirements and standards that are required today within premier public places like Victoria Square.

The design process also acknowledged the original Victoria Square design by Christchurch City Council, which won a landscape architecture award in 1989, from the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).

<sup>2</sup> 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 Restoration Plan. The overarching principles also relate to Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct project.

The formation of the design objectives were based on public feedback and input received throughout the process. These objectives then guided and informed the proposed design outcomes.

### 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.

#### 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 ensure historical and cultural aspects of the past be recognised within the design.
- To recognise the Treaty of Waitangi by providing significant standalone features and narratives that enhance the environment for all users.

#### 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 Ōtākaro/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.

#### 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.



## AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE

- To refresh the pedestrian access both within Victoria Square and via links to the broader city of Christchurch.
- To improve accessibility to the Ōtākaro/Avon River and its riverbanks, including a new punt/waka stop.
- To improve night-time lighting and surveillance to enhance safety and aesthetics.
- To ensure Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct's promenade links to Victoria Square for both pedestrians and cyclists.

### DESIGN ACTIONS

- CPTED review.
- Accessibility audit.
- Youth audit.
- Review flood impacts.
- Consider the context of future surrounding developments, for example Convention Centre, Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct promenade, Town Hall, private development and An Accessible City projects.
- Review and assess material and assess condition of all elements in Victoria Square.
- Review existing planted areas.

### DESIGN OUTCOMES

- More consistent pathway and feature lighting to complement pedestrian access and connectivity.
- A new punt/waka stop to the east of the Hamish Hay Bridge.
- Connect Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct promenade with both Armagh and Colombo Street entrances to Victoria Square.
- Repair identified levels, stairs, ramps and riverside paths.

## A PROSPEROUS PLACE

- To ensure public meeting spots are retained and re-invigorated so they have adequate or refurbished infrastructure, including seating, bins, drinking fountains, feature lighting and signage.
- To retain Victoria Square's use as a place for relaxation, enjoyment of the environment, meeting of friends and whānau, and acknowledging our shared past.
- To provide required infrastructure that supports local community events and functions.

### DESIGN ACTIONS

- CPTED review.
- Accessibility audit.
- Youth audit.
- Review flood impacts.
- Consider the context of future surrounding developments, for example Convention Centre, Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct promenade, Town Hall, private development and An Accessible City projects.
- Incorporate Art Trail initiatives.
- Review and assess asset condition of all elements in Victoria Square.

### 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.
- Integrated artworks that connect with the overall Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct design.

## Additional design objectives

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

Any design is to be audited in terms of CPTED, accessibility and road safety.



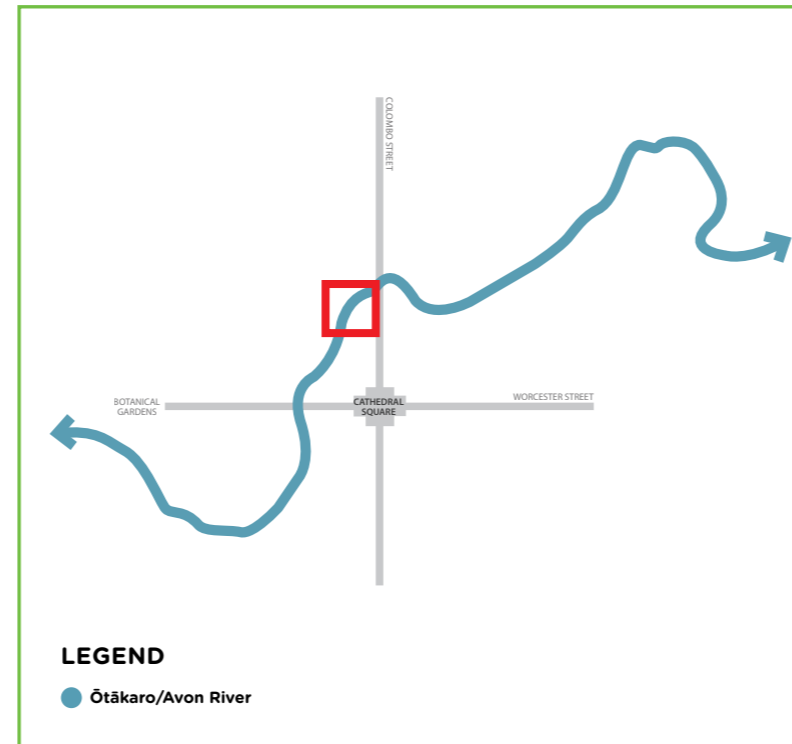
# VICTORIA SQUARE EXISTING CONTEXT

## Context Diagrams

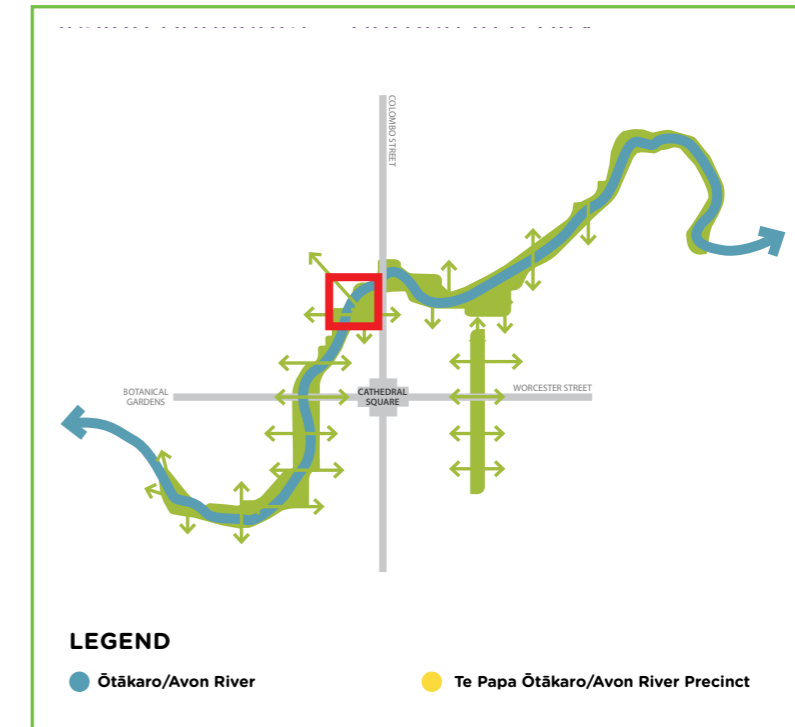
Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct has been developed around design concepts that have guided the enhancement of spaces and connections along the Precinct's 3.2km length. Victoria Square is a key space within the Precinct and the wider city context - the jewel in the crown. Many of the design concepts 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.

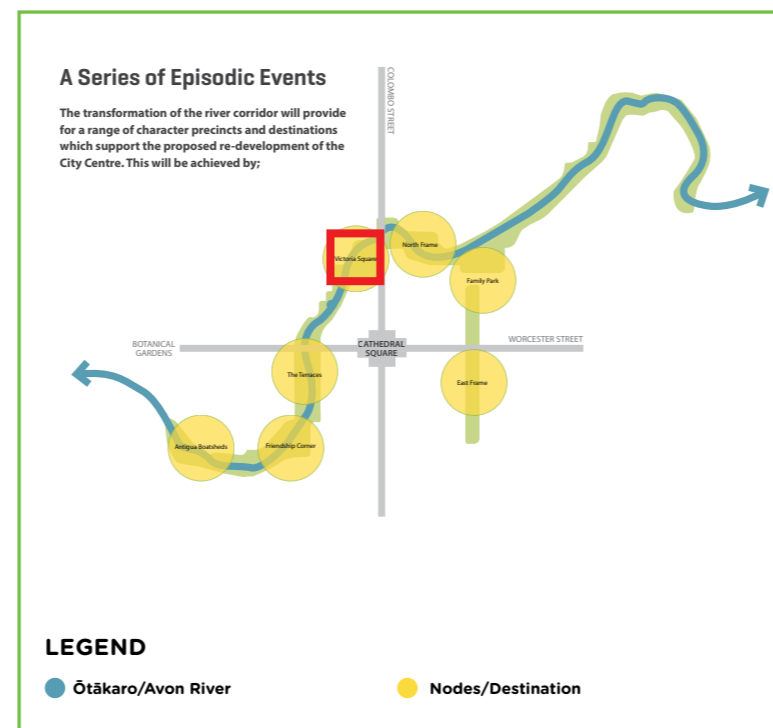
### RIVER



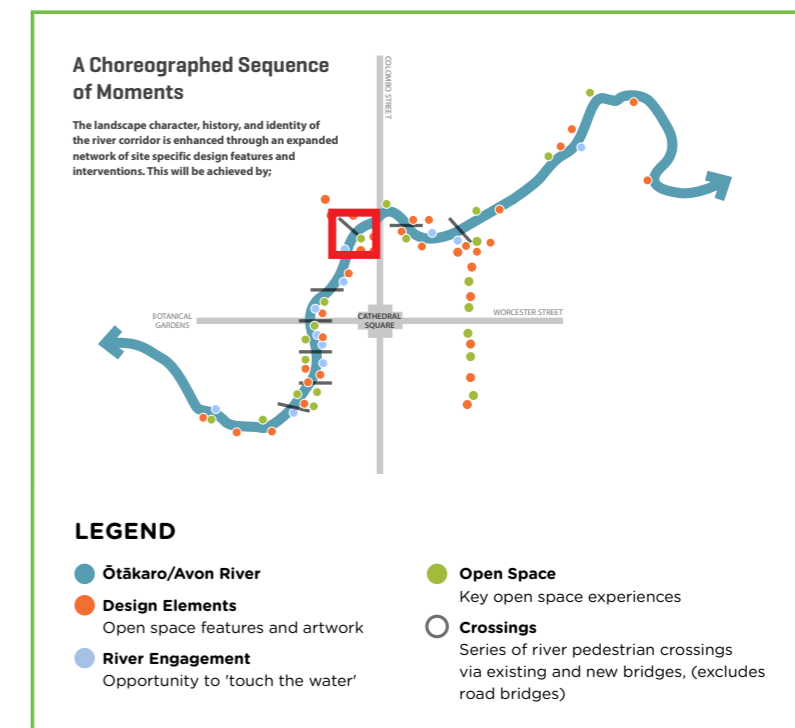
### GARDEN IN A CITY



### DESTINATIONS



### A NETWORK OF INTERVENTIONS

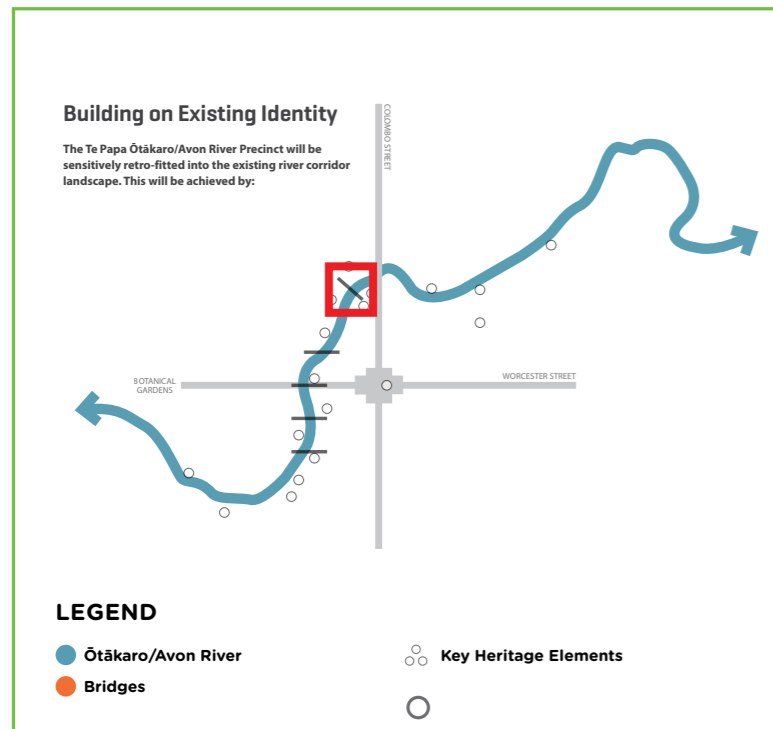


**KEY:**  
 Victoria Square

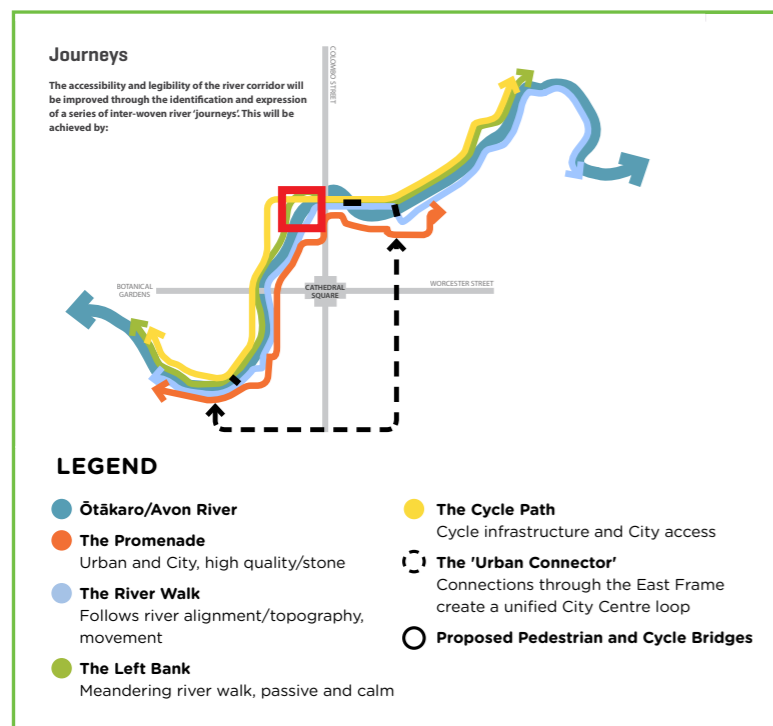




## CHARACTER AND HERITAGE



## RIVER JOURNEYS



## Existing Plan

This aerial plan view illustrates the existing Victoria Square layout and its immediate surrounding future context. This is the layout for which Christchurch City Council, and its landscape designers were recognised in 1989 by NZILA.





## WHAT WILL THE VICTORIA SQUARE RESTORATION PLAN DELIVER?

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

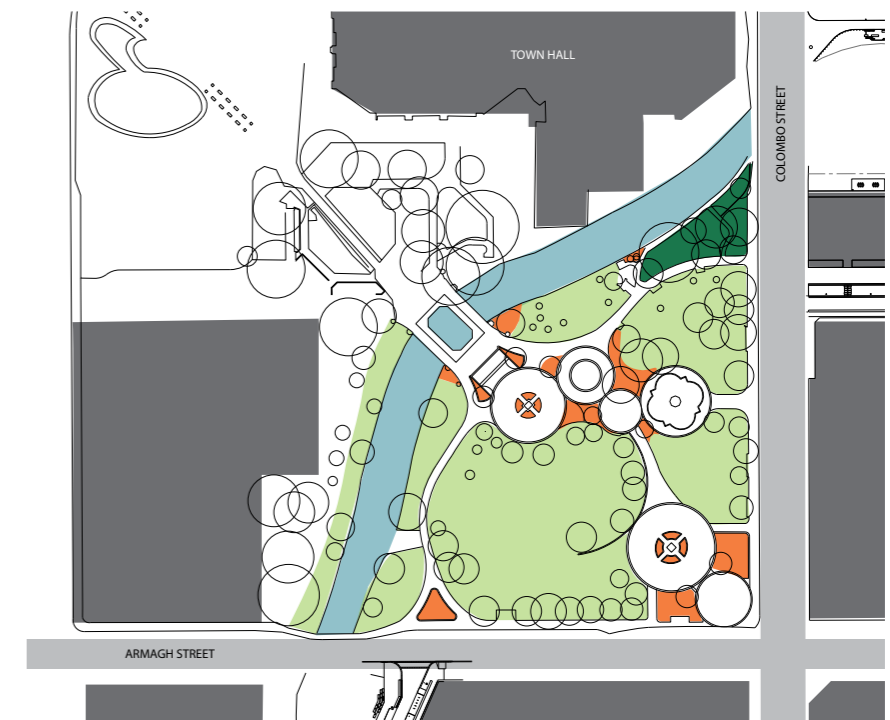
### The priority values include:

- retaining the enjoyment of the current environment
- acknowledging the past
- providing 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.



### GREEN SPACE



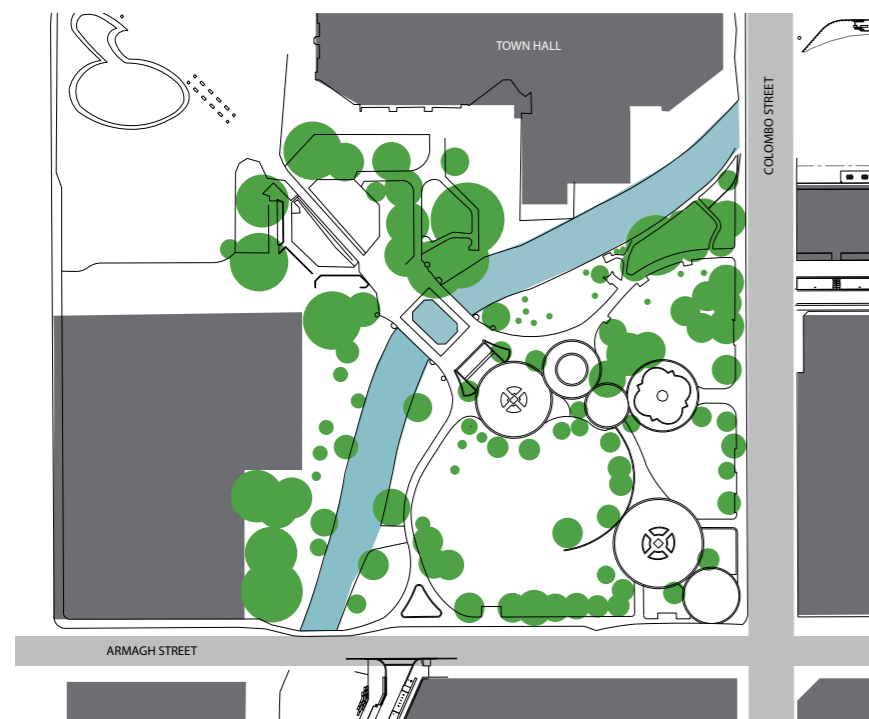
#### KEY:

- Lawn areas
- Flower bedding

The mounded lawn areas, under-planting and flower beds are retained and maintained to ensure adequate drainage. It continues to highlight the rolling grass areas, seasonal flower beds and floral colour.

*“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...”*

## TREES AND PLANTINGS



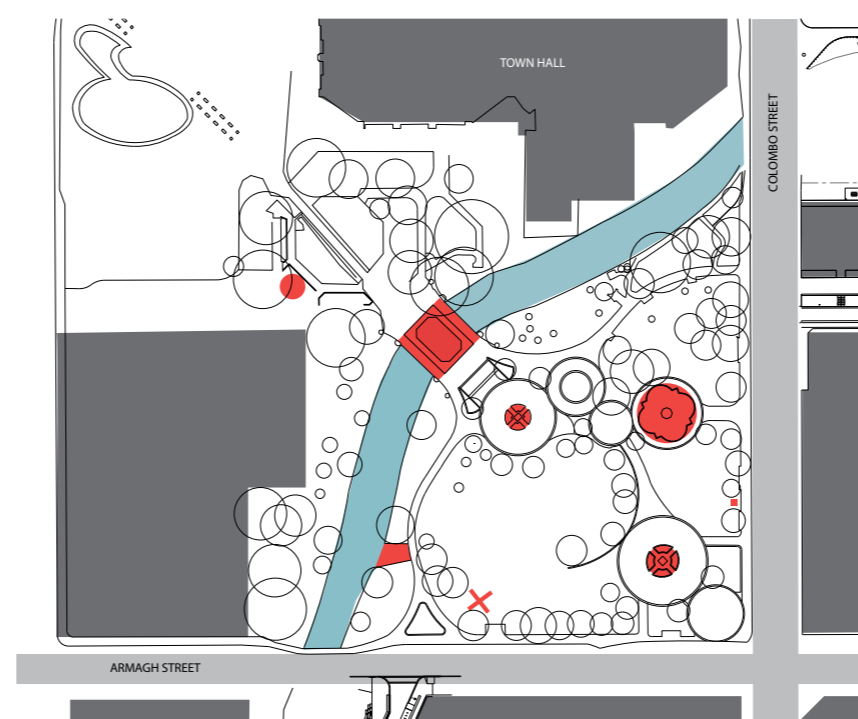
**KEY:**

■ Existing trees

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.”*

## HERITAGE FEATURES



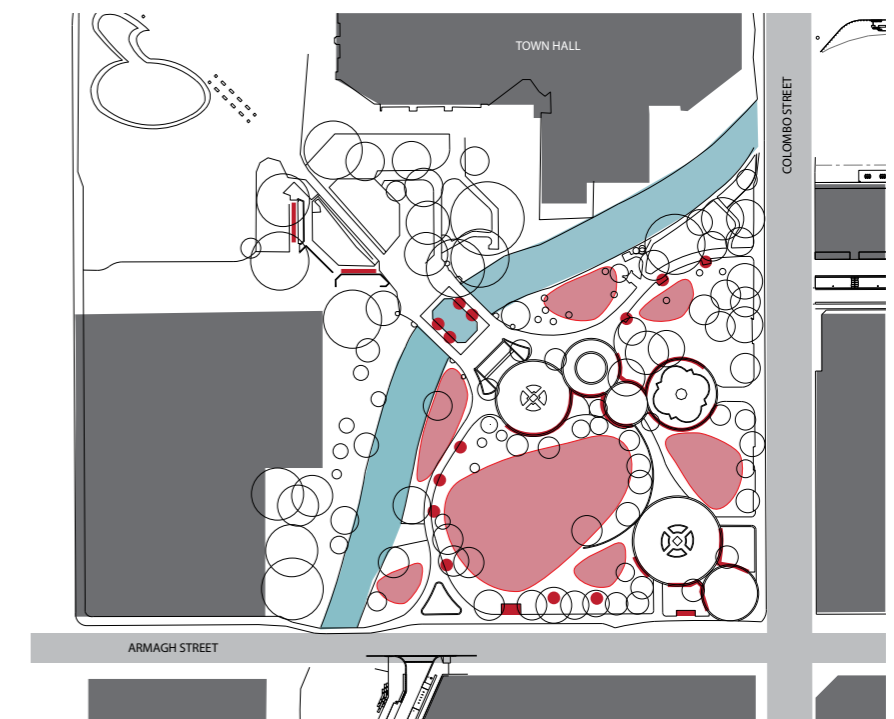
**KEY:**

■ Existing heritage features

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.”*

## SOCIAL AND ACTIVITY AREAS



**KEY:**

■ Social gathering spaces and seating areas

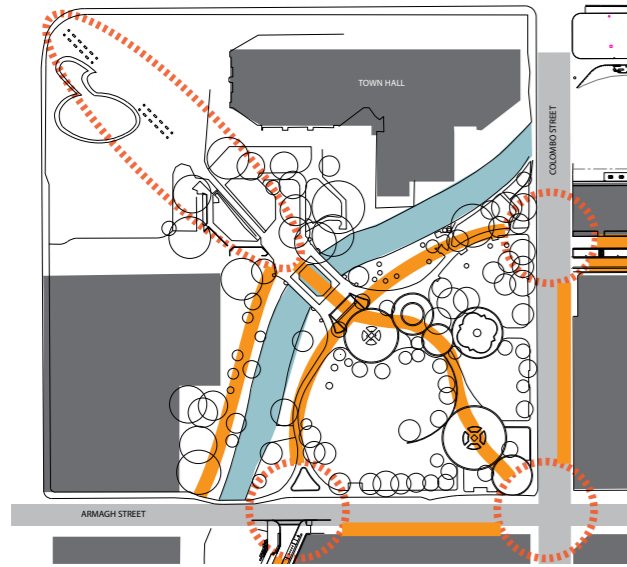
There will be areas for social meetings and activities. The areas remain consistent with the layout and use of the square in the past, with some integrated furniture elements and supporting infrastructure, for example a power box to support the Chinese Lantern Festival.

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



## Refreshed Qualities

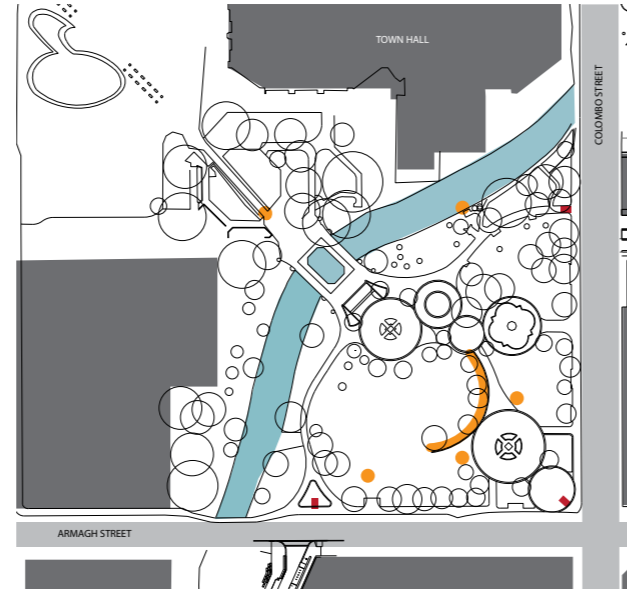
### CONNECTIONS



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



Victoria Square will provide a safe place for families and whānau. The design will deliver safety for people walking and connecting with the river, while ensuring there is good visibility around Victoria Square both day and night.

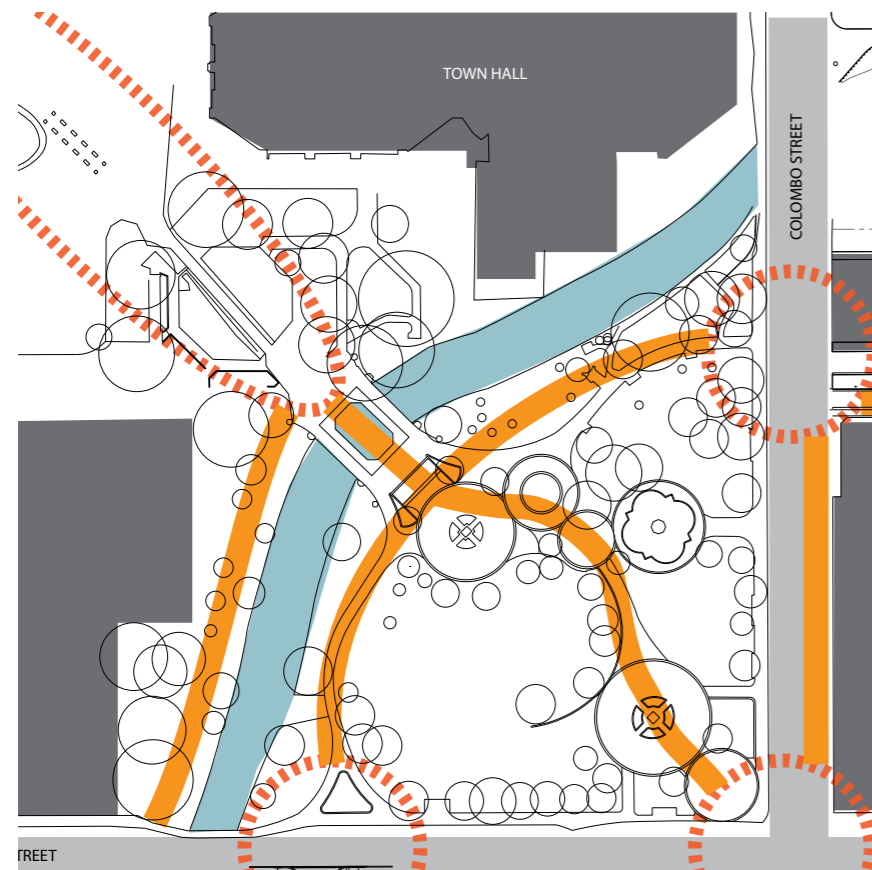
### ASSET CONDITIONS



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.

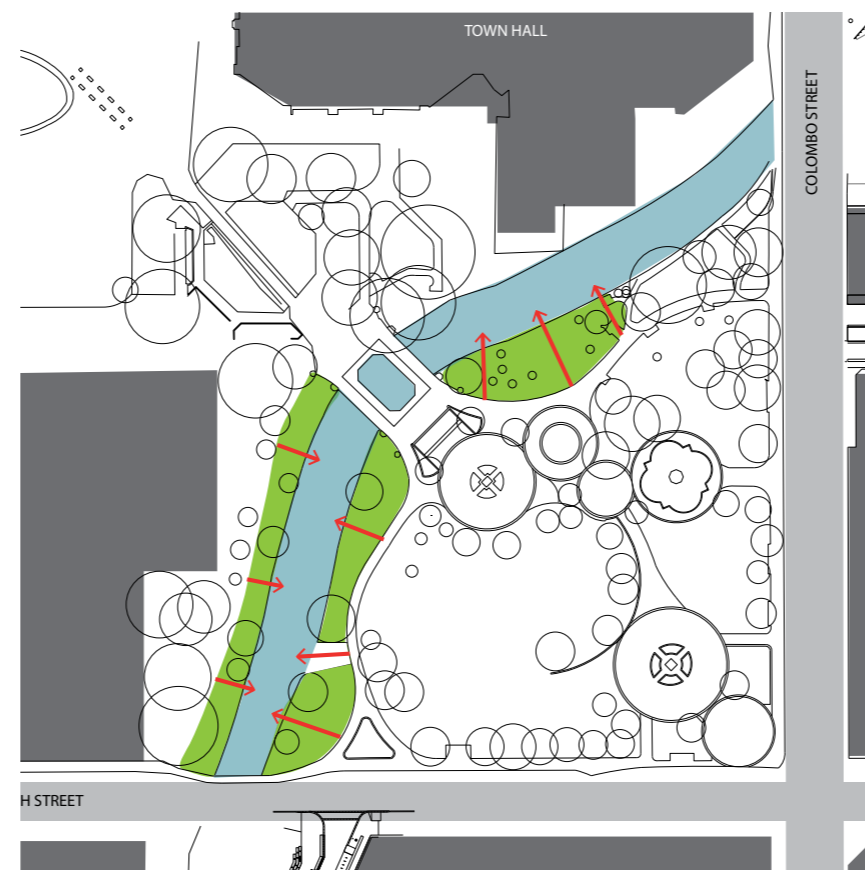
## How Do We Achieve the Desired Qualities?

### 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, providing great opportunities to get more people moving through Victoria Square. These changes include the creation of a promenade connecting the city and the river, and the North Frame that connects Victoria Square with the historic Edmonds Band Rotunda and the Margaret Mahy Family Playground/Tākaro ā Poi. 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.

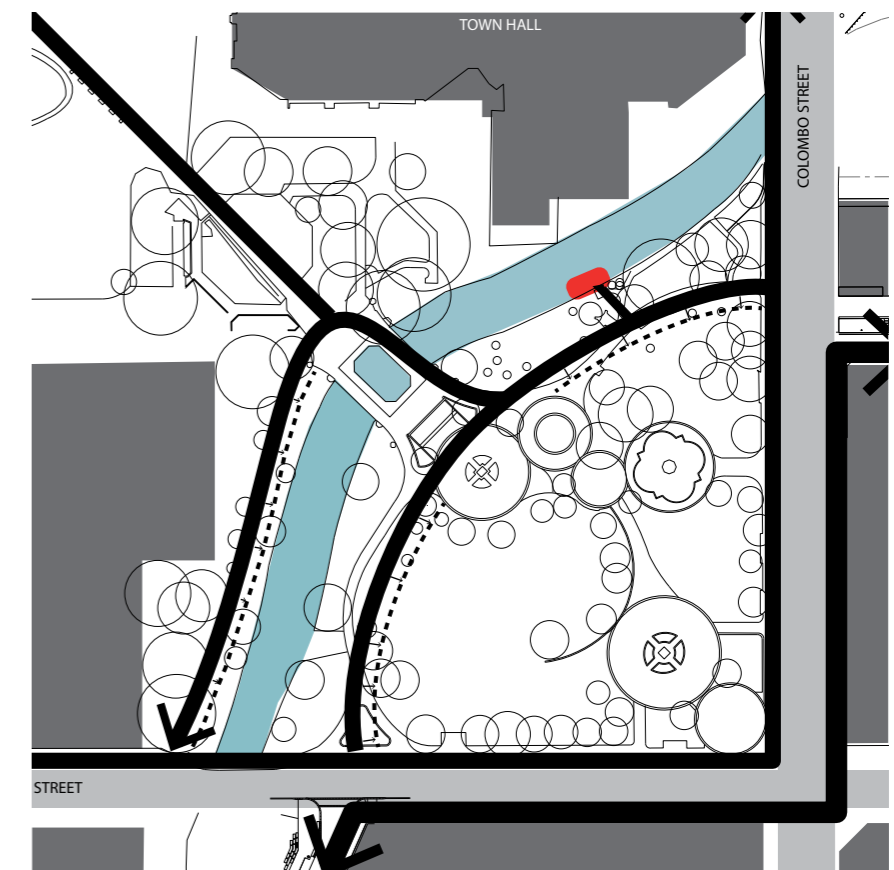
### CONNECTIONS TO WATER



*"...I like the green space and access to the river."*

Historically used as 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 supports the addition of a punt/waka stop and the 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. The Restoration Plan will improve the space provided for pedestrians and cyclists and means all steps or ramps are designed and built to meet or exceed current national standards. This ensures that Victoria Square can be enjoyed by all, regardless of age or ability.



## LIGHTING

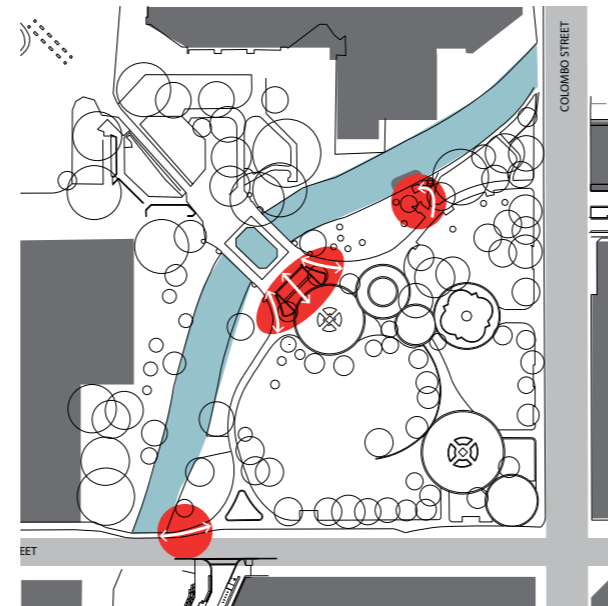


***“Include some decorative lighting at night to highlight shadows from trees and include special lighting effects with the Bowker Fountain as previously.”***

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

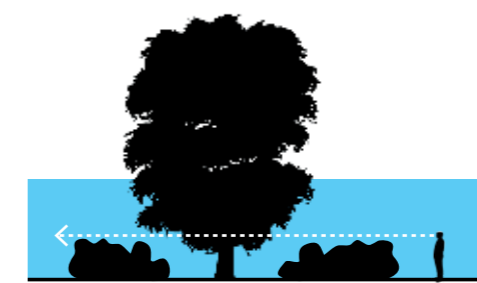
The current path and area lighting has a soft and warm quality, which complements the soft and green nature of the space. The Restoration Plan proposes retaining these lighting qualities in the upgraded lighting design, while providing tasteful and respectful feature lighting for key monuments in the 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.

## RAMPS/STAIRS



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.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT



***“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.

# ASSET CONDITION

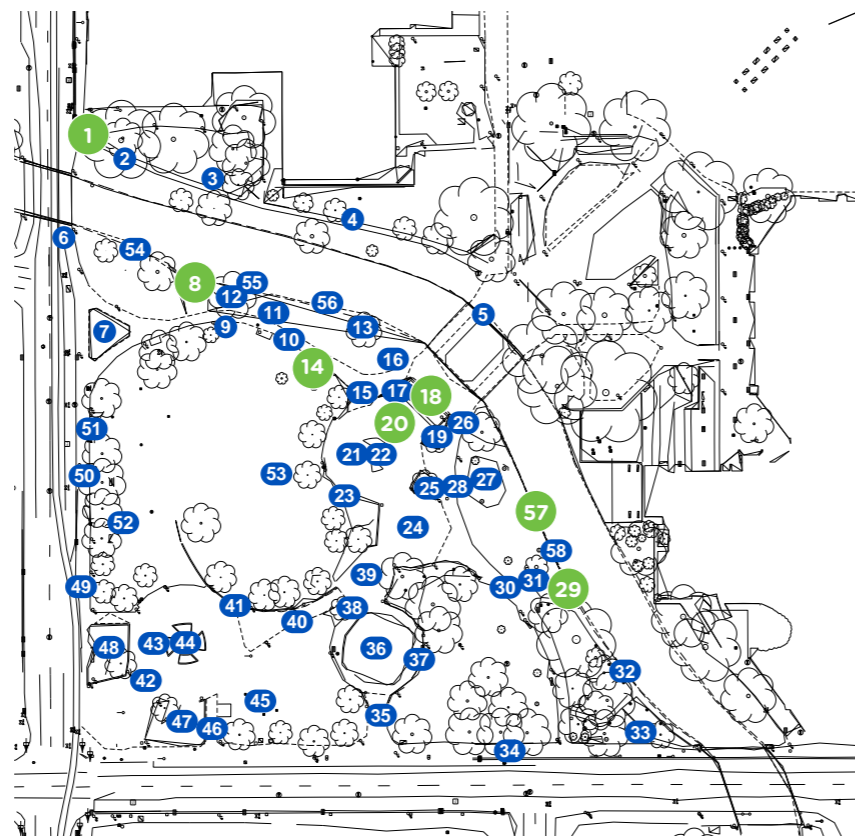
As part of the review and design process, a preliminary but focused site condition assessment was undertaken. This assessment, and associated asset review discussions within the strategic partner working group, considered current asset conditions; general wear and tear; earthquake-related damage; completed 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 was 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 restoration plan.

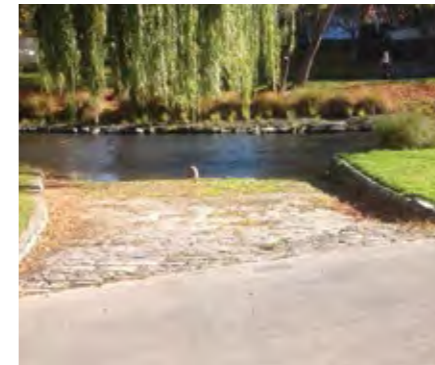
This information was presented and discussed with the Victoria Square Community Reference Group. The group then took an on-site walk with Christchurch City Council asset experts. This helped reference group members understand the unseen technical aspects that need to be considered as part of any future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

The 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.



**1** Uneven surfaces, broken pavers.



**8** Damaged ramps and heritage walls.



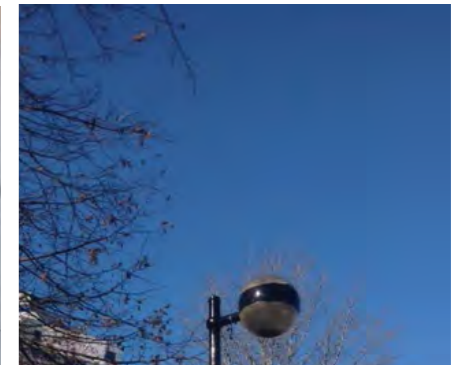
**14** Old and damaged furniture.



**18** Earthquake damaged stairs.



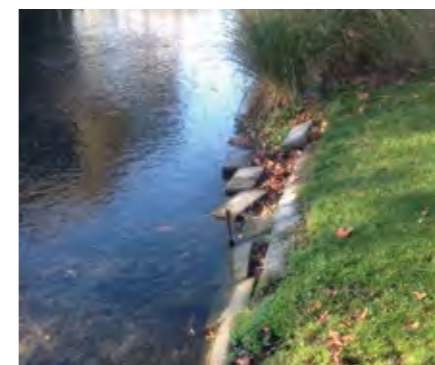
**20** Lateral spread damage to paving.



Unable to get new parts to repair and maintain existing light fittings.



**29** Earthquake slumping damage and unusable ground condition.



**57** Damaged river walls.



# 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 were incorporated whilst maintaining the green and relaxing environment. These elements are highlighted within the 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.



This diagram illustrates preliminary discussions between the strategic partner working group that identified areas for standalone elements. Also opportunities for mana whenua to have a visible presence that provides a balanced representation of the Treaty of Waitangi partnership and manaakitanga within Victoria Square.

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.

## KEY FOR THE 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/Avon 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 SCIRT.
- 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 route 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.**





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ŌTĀKARO