



SO WHAT'S NEW? (Part 2)

Few have had a longer association with the conservation and beautifying of our Cathedral than Prof. John Simpson, Emeritus Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury. He was a member of the Cathedral Conservation Committee formed by Bishop Ashby in 1968; he was on the Building Subcommittee whose immediate concern was to be the external fabric of the Cathedral; he was also a member of the subcommittee for the interior re-ordering of the Cathedral. Not only that. He has been a member of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament Charitable Trust since its inception.

In July 2007, Professor Simpson was asked to write on behalf of the Cathedral Trust to the then Mayor of Christchurch, Mr Garry Moore. The concern of the Trust was that the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament had a low profile in the city compared to its counterpart in Cathedral Square, and that little was being done to make the Catholic Cathedral better known to visitors.

Professor Simpson's letter reads as follows:

Dear Mr Moore,

Over the years as Mayor of Christchurch you have done much to support and safeguard the Catholic Cathedral and we are most appreciative and grateful for your help. The flood lighting and the grant towards the cost of seismic strengthening are among the many contributions to the Cathedral made by the CCC.

That the Cathedral is one of New Zealand's great works of architecture is not in question. When the 'Millennium Survey of World Architecture' was compiled the Cathedral was one of the few buildings selected to represent New Zealand.

The sad fact is very few tourists know of the Cathedral's existence, importance and beauty, and leave Christchurch still unaware of what they have missed. The purpose of this letter is to start a process which will eventually remedy this unfortunate situation. Some measures to achieve this could probably be done simply and quickly but others may need to be incorporated into existing, or even future schemes, for development. The key is that the rather out of the way location of the Cathedral is compensated for by information systems designed to assist visitors and tourists.

With respect it seems to me that you and your officials are ideally placed to know which persons, committees, processes, regulatory authorities could be instrumental in making changes that would help tourists get the most out of their time in Christchurch, and if they wished to visit the Cathedral in Barbados Street. We believe it could be in everyone's interests for the CCC to accept a leadership role and long term commitment to inform tourists of the many and unique features to be found in the City.

You have already done much to help the Cathedral so please may we ask you to make the contents of this letter known to those who may best be able to help make the Cathedral become better known and frequently visited.

Yours sincerely,
John Simpson.



PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. That a designated 'City Walk' be planned from Cathedral Square to the Catholic Cathedral with suitable signposting and other cultural and support features, and that a small leaflet be printed and made available at suitable outlets giving details of the principal points of interest along the walk.
2. That the Catholic Cathedral as a very important architectural building be given a place in the Square, a tangible presence in the form of a bronze cast model of the Cathedral mounted on a stone plinth the sides of which could have incised descriptions about the Cathedral. To give some sense of scale, the model could be about 40mm. in height and the plinth W.800mm. D.800mm. and H.1200mm. This would mark the starting point of the 'City Walk to the Catholic Cathedral.'
3. The 'Official Tourist Guide' should list the Cathedral and give location and visiting hours. It could contain a map showing bus routes and stops close to the Cathedral.
4. Publishers of maps of Christchurch could be asked to show the Cathedral correctly identified on their detailed maps and include it in their list of places and features.
5. That 'the Official Guides of Christchurch' be asked to consider including the Catholic Cathedral in some of their programmes.
6. That 'TE PUNA O WAIWHETU CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY' be requested to produce a leaflet showing some of the works of art which may be viewed by visiting the Catholic Cathedral and to make them freely available at information desks.

H J S

SO WHAT'S NEW? (Part 3)

On 4th September 2008, Rugby New Zealand announced that Christchurch had been chosen as the venue for two quarter-final matches of the World Rugby Cup in 2011. It was a break in the clouds that gave promise of better things to come for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

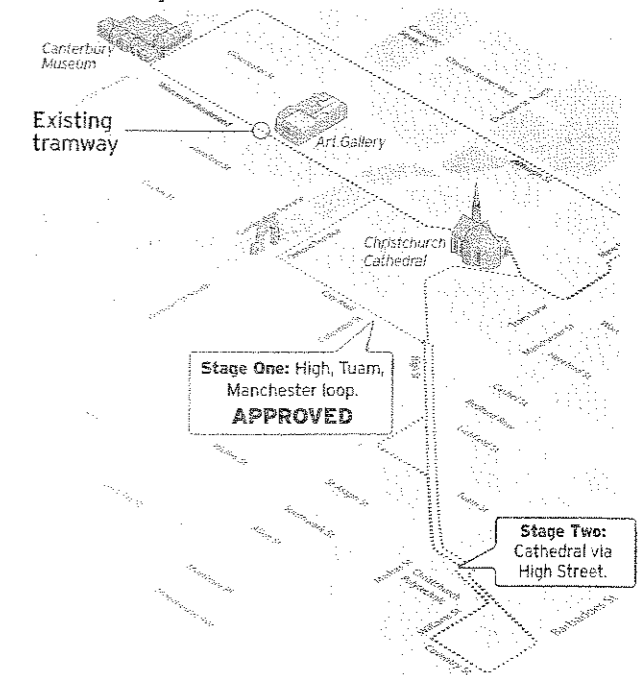
Earlier, Christchurch had made a bid for at least one quarter-final for the city, and to its credit the C.C.C. had promised to create a 'Stadium Walk' down High Street to the Polytechnic grounds, through to the precincts of the Catholic Cathedral and on to what was known as Jade Stadium, since designated AMI Stadium.

Presumably, the plan will still go ahead as announced. But this year there have been further developments in the City Council's plan for the future of the area known as Central City South. On June 27th, The Press announced that the CCC had given the green light for an \$11.5 million investment to more than double Christchurch's existing tram track. It is intended that the tram track route be extended as far as Tuam Street in time for the 2011 Rugby World Cup, and that later a second stage will extend the route down to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

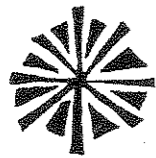
The first stage of the extension will run from the current route on Worcester Blvd, down Oxford Terrace, along City Mall, down High Street as far as Tuam Street before looping back to Cathedral Square. Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker said the extension was a wise investment in the city's tourist industry. 'This is about doing something for one of the most important employers and economic assets this city has' he said.

How long it will take to see phase two up and running is anyone's guess. But recognition of the architectural and heritage importance of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament has at least taken a step forward thanks to the Rugby World Cup of 2011.

Tramway extensions



Green light for tramway extensions, and a pledge of future things to come ...



POSTSCRIPT to 'NOT TO BE MISSED' (Easter Newsletter '09)

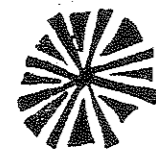
Dear Jim,

Many thanks for your generous description of my autobiography. It was a delight and a special challenge to work with you and the Trust on the conservation and re-ordering of the Cathedral. I don't stand alongside Francis William Petre; I simply stand in his admiring shadow.

You mention seeing me making a water colour sketch of the proposed new forecourt. Here it is; a memento of our pleasure working so constructively together.

With warm regards,

Miles



..... NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Does any 'Friend' know the address of an M.S. Williams, who on the 9th August last year sent a cheque for \$50.00, simply marked 'Friends of the Cathedral'? I presume it was a new subscription plus a donation. I wrote out a receipt, but have no record of an address, which means I cannot acknowledge it, much less send a newsletter to this new 'Friend'. Someone out there may be able to help. JMH

'Friends of the Cathedral' Newsletter: Cathedral House, PO Box 4544, Christchurch.

NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CATHEDRAL



No 78 : AUGUST 2009

SO WHAT'S NEW? (Part 1)

The Press of May 4th this year, carried a reflection on the South Island and 'in-and-out' visitors to our country. It was taken from a publication called 'Lonely Planet'. The heading for this critique was 'a 2:1 southern victory over the north'.

But it was a comment at the end of the piece that took my eye: 'In Christchurch,' the author wrote, 'the floral clock in Victoria Square again gets the award for the city's most tacky tourist attraction, but praise is otherwise lavish for the Garden City/South Island gateway'. And he continues: 'Missing, as usual is a listing for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on Barbadoes St - an omission, too, by smaller publications that dumbfounds visitors lucky enough to encounter this Australasian ecclesiastical jewel

So, what's new? In February 1973, as the newly appointed Administrator of the Cathedral, I took myself to the Visitor Centre in Cathedral Square and asked to see the person in charge. I inquired how it was that a building of the calibre of the Catholic Cathedral did not warrant a mention in the visitor's guide to Christchurch. It could only be an oversight, said the man in charge. A pretty big oversight I said!

And so it was that a photograph and a brief description of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament found its way into the visitor's guide. At what stage it was dropped I have no idea, but the guidebook winter/spring 09 makes only one reference to our Cathedral. A map of the inner city marks its location. Strangely, a list of recommended highlights makes no mention of it. Nor does the list of 'Free Things to Do'.

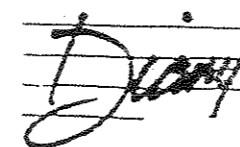
More recently, in its 'Letters to the Editor', The Press carried a response from Fr John Fitzmaurice, the current Cathedral Administrator, in which he gently chided Dean Peter Beck, his counterpart at the Cathedral in the Square, over a nearly full page ad which appeared in the paper on June 26th. The ad began: 'Can you imagine Christchurch without its Cathedral - the heart and soul of Christchurch?'

"There are two cathedrals in Christchurch," wrote Fr Fitzmaurice, "and the other one, the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Barbadoes Street has stood there for nearly 105 years. We, too, are open 365 days a year and we, too regard ourselves as something of the heart and soul of our beautiful city." He continued: "I do not wish to appear less than generous in supporting the appeal for help from our sister cathedral, but the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament can always do with generous friends and supporters."

In recent months, Fr Fitzmaurice has been appealing for funds for the new Reconciliation Chapel in our Cathedral. Religious Orders and others with past and present connections have been most generous in responding. To date \$46,028.00 has been subscribed, and soon an appeal is to go out to the parishes of the Diocese as well. Hopefully they too will be generous. We all have need of friends, and cathedrals are no exception.

For the Cathedral Trustees

Monsignor J.M. Harrington



'FRIENDS OF THE CATHEDRAL'
ANNUAL MASS and GATHERING
SUNDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2009

