

THE CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKES IMPACT ON INNER CITY “COLONISERS”

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ABSTRACT

The 2010 and 2011 earthquakes have had a devastating impact on the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. The level of destruction has been especially evident in the central business district where it has been estimated over 1000 buildings have already been or will eventually require demolition. Although, contrary to expectations, most of the fatalities were in relatively modern buildings, the Victorian and Edwardian era building stock was especially hard hit in terms of property damage. Unfortunately this era and style of building were also the focus of the most successful inner city revitalisation projects to date. A major research project is now underway examining the impact on the earthquakes on one of these revitalisation areas. The first step is to examine the international literature on similar inner city revitalisation or gentrification areas and in particular the characteristics of owners and occupiers attracted to this type of environment. This is the focus of this paper.

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Introduction

The process that was underway in the Lichfield Lanes study area prior to the earthquakes can be described as inner city revitalisation incorporating adaptive reuse and some aspects of gentrification. This paper briefly outlines the comprehensive body of literature on gentrification that has emerged over the past fifty years

Defining Gentrification

There is wide debate about how gentrification can be defined and it is a controversial and politically charged subject (Smith 1996, Ley 1986 1994, Shaw 2002, Hackworth 2002, Boddy 2007, Kennedy and Leonard 2001, Bounds and Morris 2006, Slater et. al.2004). The term was first coined by Ruth Glass (1964) in her work, London: aspects of change and in its loosest definition can be described as the movement of middle classes back into city centres (Savage, Warde and Ward, 2002) or a process by which middle-class people take up residence in a traditionally working class area, changing its character (Collins Concise English Dictionary).

Gentrification usually significantly increases property values, rents and consequently taxes in an area and as a result can displace both residents and businesses. It also can change culture, ethnic

composition and result in new retail, office and residential uses in previously run- down neighbourhoods.

Some researchers frame gentrification as a process of disinvestment and re-investment in a particular neighbourhood, where public policies and the owners of capital conspire to enable substantial profits from gentrification. Others use the term interchangeably with urban revitalization, to describe any commercial or residential improvements in (usually low income) urban neighbourhoods. Others focus on the renovation and upgrading of the housing stock by newcomers. In contrast to these property-focused visions of the gentrification process, others describe gentrification as the class and racial tensions and dislocation—the socioeconomic or people-based effects—that frequently accompany the arrival of new residents into a neighbourhood (Kennedy and Leonard 2001).

While generally, gentrification involves the displacement of a working class residential population with a middle class residential population better able to afford higher capital values and rents - this is not always the case. It can also involve the conversion of old industrial and commercial buildings to mixed uses, including shops and entertainment venues as well as residences. These may cater to a more affluent or wider base of consumers, making businesses and property redevelopment more viable (Bounds and Morris 2006). This in turn attracts, further investment again increasing the appeal to more affluent consumers and decreasing the accessibility to the poor and eventually even the initial gentrifiers (Hackworth 2002, Ley 1994, Zukin 1989).

A more comprehensive definition of gentrification put forward by Warde (1991) identifies

1. Resettlement and social concentration entailing the displacement of one group of residents with another of higher social status;
2. Transformation in the built environment exhibiting some distinctive aesthetic features and the emergence of new local services;
3. The gathering together of persons with a putatively shared culture, or at least with shared, class-related consumer preferences;
4. Economic reordering of property values, a commercial opportunity for the construction industry, and often an extension of the system of domestic property ownership.

All but the first of these processes are exhibited by the Lichfield Lanes study area.

In the case of Christchurch generally, and the study area in particular, the occupation of the central city for residential purposes, whether by working class, middle class or anyone else never really happened. Christchurch has been essentially sub-urban from its inception in the 1840's (Valance Perkins and Moore 2005). Historically, inner city living has not been part of the culture of Christchurch or New Zealand (Morrison and McMurray 1999) and development was planned from the start to avoid the problems of over-crowding, prostitution, gambling, disease and criminal or immoral behaviour common in Victorian era European cities. Brooking (1996) as quoted in Valance, Perkins and Moore (2005) states " ... the single, detached dwelling on a residential section or lot of, preferably, a quarter acre was considered virtuous".

There is evidence of the spatial segregation of Christchurch along zonal and sectoral lines (McDonagh, 2007) as identified by Burgess (1925) and Hoyt (1939) but the zone of transition in which the most marginal members of society are usually concentrated is not immediately surrounding the CBD, as in many cities – but in the inner suburbs. Some of the older inner suburbs have been taken over by industrial uses in recent decades. For example Sydenham, once full of worker's cottages, is now almost entirely service industrial. This was initiated by the planning blight that descended on the area in the 1960's due to a major motorway designation – long ago abandoned. The Sydenham residents were displaced to further flung low cost suburban housing areas such as Aranui and Bishopdale. But other inner areas, such as Linwood and Spreydon remain and have always been predominantly residential – though the density is slowly increasing as a result of individual older houses being replaced with medium density low rise townhouses (Valance Perkins and Moore 2005). Displacement by gentrification in the inner city has been limited.

A question therefore arises that if displacement, one of the key characteristics identified in many gentrification studies is missing – is the situation under study in Christchurch still gentrification?

The displacement of existing and usually poor residential communities is often seen as one of the most pervasive and negative aspects of gentrification (Ley 1994, Kennedy and Leonard 2001, plus many others) – so the Christchurch situation appears better for the lack of it.

There is also the issue that gentrification is often characterised as reducing the heterogeneous character of a community to a more economically homogeneous community that some describe as having a suburban character (Brydson 2008). This is certainly not the case in the Lichfield Lanes study area, with it exhibiting pre earthquake, a much greater variety of uses, occupants and incomes than is typical in suburban New Zealand. This reflects the situation found in Australia by Bounds and

Morris (2006) and their position that the traditional meaning of gentrification is anachronistic and that it both needs to be widened and has location specific characteristics. Also supporting this position is the work of Hackworth (2002) and Beauregard (1986) who concluded that *“gentrification (and decline) must be recognised as a chaotic concept connoting many diverse if interrelated events and processes . . .”*

In these circumstances, would the process underway in Christchurch be better described as inner city revitalisation? This is described by Kennedy and Leonard (2001) as;

“the process of enhancing the physical, commercial and social components of neighbourhoods and the future prospects of its residents through private sector and/or public sector efforts. Physical components include upgrading of housing stock and streetscapes. Commercial components include the creation of viable businesses and services in the community. Social components include increasing employment and reductions in crime. Gentrification sometimes occurs in the midst of the revitalization process”.

All of the above characteristics were exhibited by the study area and the revitalisation terminology does not have the negative connotations of gentrification. But gentrification itself can be seen as a positive or negative phenomenon - or both, depending on the situation and the point of view of the respondent.

An alternative, or additional description could be inner city revitalisation involving adaptive reuse – incorporating some aspects of gentrification. The process underway appears to have involved all three processes as it involves the modification and/or change in use of a previously low rent retail, office and warehousing area to higher value mixed uses – incorporating again retail and office space, but largely for the first time residential and entertainment uses.

While some typical and important aspects of gentrification appear to be missing from the study situation, those numbered 2 to 4 by Warde (1991) and outlined above are clearly evident. Further consideration of theories of gentrification was therefore considered essential to this study and key literature in this regard is summarised below.

Theories of Gentrification

The production side theory of gentrification is associated with Professor Neil Smith (Smith 1996). This explains gentrification as an economic process where inner city capital is initially diverted to the

suburbs where risks are lower and returns higher. In time this leads to devaluing of central city areas to such an extent that redevelopment eventually becomes more attractive to capital and re-investment and gentrification occurs. He describes this as Rent-Gap Theory where there is a difference between *"the actual capitalized ground rent (land price) of a plot of land given its present use, and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a 'higher and better' use"*. (Smith, 1996).

This rent gap or highest and best use concept is very familiar to property developers, investment analysts and Valuers and a fundamental principle of investment feasibility studies. When the gap or difference is sufficiently wide, in relation to the costs and risks involved, real estate developers, investors, and others with vested interests in property development recognise the potential profit and re-enter the market. Change of use takes place and as owners will charge the maximum rent the market will bear this eventually closes the rent gap, as the rent affordable to new tenants with new uses exceeds that affordable to the original lower income tenants. In turn the higher rent and now reduced risk is capitalised at lower rates of return into higher values (Beauregard 2005).

Zukin (1989), whose work will be discussed in detail later, reports on such an economic process impacting on the *"artist loft"* real estate business in Manhattan. The owners of the building where she resided converted it to a "co-op" administration in 1979, and she *"bade good-bye to the manufacturers, an artist, and several residents who could not afford the market prices at which our lofts were sold"*. She observed that over time *"rich lawyers and accountants, retail business people and investment bankers replaced the suburban 'starving artist' bohemian 'first-stage gentrifiers' who initiated the gentrification of Hell's Kitchen, in mid-town New York City, Harlem, Washington Heights, Astoria, and areas of West/Northwest Brooklyn"*.

Another economic aspect identified is de-industrialization of inner city areas reduces the number of blue-collar jobs available to the urban working class and the investment capital needed to physically maintain the original houses and buildings of the inner city departs. De-industrialization often also leads to growth of white collar and/or service employment in the same location (Ley 1986, Hamnett 2003).

Both the above situations appear to apply to Central Christchurch to some extent. Not so much in terms of squeezing out blue collar residents – who never really occupied the central city to any extent – but more in the de industrialisation of the CBD. This led to underutilised buildings and lowered values, eventually recognised as an opportunity by some small scale property developers. The new "highest and best uses" included a mix of residential, retail and entertainment space – all

pitched resolutely at the middle class white collar and service sector worker. While there are similarities - this is somewhat different from the artists so often instrumental as owner/occupier/informal developer in early stage gentrification studies from the 1960's and 70's.

This latter situation is reflective of the consumption-side theory of gentrification advanced by David Ley (1986). This postulates the requirements of a service sector economic class of university-educated adults (aged 25–45) with higher disposable incomes, who wish to live near jobs in the city, drives gentrification. This economic class arose when most Western economies (including New Zealand and Christchurch to some extent) transitioned from manufacturing to post-industrial service economies.

In a parallel but more significant degree to that identified in Auckland by Le Heron and McDermott (2001) cited in Murphy (2008), central Christchurch has moved from an economy founded on production to one centred on services and more especially consumption.

The subject area was once the centre of the clothing manufacturing trade in Christchurch, but the deregulation that commenced in the 1980's saw much of this industry replaced by imports and that remaining moved to suburban industrial buildings. At the same time the rapid expansion of suburban shopping malls provided professional and often fatal competition to traditional, small, inner city retailers. This process follows the de-industrialisation or counter urbanisation pattern identified by many authors (for example Curran 2007) but it is important to be wary about generalising the processes observed in Europe and the USA. While New Zealand life styles may have more in common with the USA than much of Europe, there are still dangers in assuming different countries have the same urban systems.

There is also the issue identified by Savage Warde and Ward (2002) that contemporary cities are increasingly differentiated from each other in terms of their economic role. This is certainly the case within New Zealand with Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland having markedly different bases to their economies. Changing technology, corporate takeovers and the reduction and centralisation of government and corporate offices to Wellington, Auckland and cities in Australia substantially reduced the need for office based services In Christchurch over the last 30 years (Morrisey 1993).

The result in Christchurch was that many of the high rise office buildings built during the 1980's boom period failed to find tenants, bankrupting the developers and often the financiers and construction companies involved as well. Many of these vacancies in new buildings persisted for over ten years, or were reduced by extravagant leasing incentives and/or deep discounting of rents to such a level that effective prime office rents were half the level necessary for the economic

development of new space. The trickledown effect also depressed rents in all other sectors of the CBD property market meaning low levels of new construction.

There were several positive developments for the Christchurch CBD during this period of 1988 to 2002. Continued international tourism growth to New Zealand saw increased demand for hotel accommodation in Christchurch as the gateway city to the South Island (McDonagh 1997). This led to a number of office building - to hotel conversions taking place in the mid 1990's reducing the office vacancy rate from over 30% to the mid teens. However, Christchurch did not see the office to apartment conversions common in the same period in Wellington and Auckland (Morrison and McMurray 1999 and Murphy 2008) or in New York (Beauregard 2005) and other cities with high office vacancy rates.

Changes in New Zealand's liquor licensing laws in the late 1980's and some initially illegal but popular occupation of footpath areas by cafe and bar tables (to encourage alfresco dining) eventually led to the city council relenting its ban on this type of activity, with the result that many vacant or marginal ground floor retail premises were converted to bars and restaurants.

This also coincided with a crackdown on drink driving, so the large suburban "*booze barns*" so typical of the 1970s and 1980s were replaced by a more sophisticated inner city bar scene. This eventually meant increased retail rents for those premises and locations that lent themselves to this type of operation – most notably on the Oxford terrace "*strip*" adjacent to the scenic Avon River and more recently in the Lichfield Lanes area. The level of rents obtainable from this change in use also meant adaptive reuse and refurbishment of space started to become economic as per the rent gap theory of Smith (1996).

For those premises not suitable for entertainment uses, the depressing effect on rents of oversupply of retail and office space in the CBD also meant that "*low rent*" businesses that otherwise might not have become established have been able to find low cost accommodation. This is a common characteristic of first wave gentrification areas.

London and Palen (1984) attempt to categorise the theories that explain gentrification into five groups. These are (1)demographic-ecological, (2)socio-cultural, (3)political-economical, (4)community networks, and (5)social movements.

The demographic-ecological approach, explains gentrification through changing demographics, particularly the growth in population by the baby boom generation increasing demand for housing and causing affordability problems. While there is certainly a current housing affordability problem

in Christchurch, the limited number and relative cost of CBD residential accommodation in the subject area seems to indicate this is not the primary factor in this case.

However, other demographic factors identified by London and Palen (1984) could well be influential. For example, recent generations get married older, have fewer children, and the children they have are born later. Women have entered the work force at high rates leading to dual wage-earner households becoming common. Households are often composed of young, more affluent couples without children who are not concerned with the conditions of schools and playgrounds (Morrison, and McMurray 1999, Murphy 2008 and others) . They usually have white-collar, not blue-collar jobs and want to live closer to work. For the first time an inner city lifestyle may be viable for some of these people rather than traditional Christchurch suburban environment. There is also potential demand from relatively affluent *"empty nesters"* as identified by Bounds and Morris(2006) in the gentrification of parts of Sydney .

The second theory category proposed by London and Palen (1984) is socio-cultural. This theory argues that values, sentiments, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and choices should be used to explain and predict human behaviour. This also reflects the ideas of Ley (1994) mentioned above. Changing attitudes, lifestyles, and values of (at least some of) the middle- and upper-middle-classes mean they are becoming more pro-urban than before, opting to reject suburban areas. London and Palen (1984) refer to the first people to invade the cities as *"urban pioneer"* while Glass (1964) identifies them as *"colonists"* . These urban pioneers or colonists demonstrated that the inner-city was an *"appropriate"* and *"viable"* place to live, resulting in what is often termed *"inner city chic"*. The opposing side of this argument is that dominant, or recurring values determine where people decide to live, not the changing values previously cited. This means that people choose to live in a gentrified area to restore it, not to alter it, because restoration is a *"new way to realize old values"* (London and Palen 1984). Hamnett (2003) also identifies some people *"place a high aesthetic value on the types of period property available in the inner-city"*.

These first stage gentrifiers are critical to initiating gentrification in post-industrial parts of a city. They are a *"new middle class"* or sub culture – not typical of the majority of the middle classes and described as *"a creative class of artists, teachers, and cultural administrators"* by Ley (1994).

Sometimes also described as bourgeois bohemians or BoBo's *"artists move into otherwise undesirable buildings, [and] usually make significant improvements to their spaces, and their surrounding areas. Everyone benefits from these tenuous and uneasy ... arrangements. Then, landlords becoming aware that they are sitting on gold mines, rush to cash in"* (Cash 2001).

This category of theory appears to resonate well with the subject situation with study area occupants appearing to both value the “*difference*” the urban environment offers to the more recent and still dominant Christchurch and New Zealand tradition of suburbia, but also keen to retain the “*character*” of the older Victorian era city, which also may evoke pleasant memories of overseas urban experiences as identified by Morrison and McMurray (1999).

The third theoretical explanation of gentrification is political-economic and includes traditional and Marxist approaches.

The traditional approach argues the changing political and legal climate of the 1950s and 60s led to gentrification of neighbourhoods. A decrease in prejudice led to more racial integration in both the suburbs and inner cities. The decreasing availability of suburban land and inflation in suburban housing costs, often driven by anti-sprawl policies, also inspired inner city development.

The Marxist approach argues that *"powerful interest groups follow a policy of neglect of the inner city until such time as they become aware that policy changes could yield tremendous profits"* (London and Palen 1984).

Neither of these theories appears to clearly apply strongly to the Christchurch situation. Racial prejudice and integration have not been a significant factor in the CBD and while neglect and real reductions in real estate values may have occurred in some areas over the last twenty years there is no evidence this was a conscious action by powerful interest groups. However other economic factors – as identified by Smith and especially the economic restructuring of New Zealand in the 1980's and 1990's discussed earlier (Murphy 2008, Morrissey 1993 and others) appear relevant and will be considered in this research.

The community as an interactive social group is the fourth theory of gentrification proposed by London and Palen (1984). One perspective – “*community lost*” argues the role of the neighbourhood is becoming more limited due to advances in transportation and communication. The opposite – “*community saved*” seems more applicable to the study situation. Initial impressions and discussions appear to indicate that community activity, interaction and street life increased significantly as a result of the revitalisation of the Lichfield Lanes area and prior to the earthquake this was one of the attractions to occupants and visitors to the district.

Social movements is the fifth approach identified. This theory focuses on leader-follower analysis of ideologically based movements. Those who support gentrification are encouraged by leaders

(successful urban pioneers/colonists, political-economic elites, land developers, lending institutions, and government) to revive the inner-city. Those who are in opposition are the people who currently reside in the deteriorated areas.

In the study situation the former can be readily identified as important, but it is not that clear if there was much in the way of opposition to the process underway pre- earthquake. The situation may now have changed however, as the original pioneers/colonists or early stage gentrifiers may be displaced by third wave, new build gentrifiers.

Alternatively, or in addition, business disruption, psychological effects of the earthquake, limited access to finance, the economics of redevelopment, problems with insurance claims and availability, a toughened regulatory situation in relation to earthquake strengthening and town planning requirements and possible stigma associated with the CBD and old buildings may preclude or inhibit further involvement by these early stage gentrifiers. It will be interesting to see if opposition from groups to the new post earthquake situation in the study area now develops.

Many of the above theories are comprehensively illustrated in the substantive work of sociologist Sharon Zukin in her book *Loft Living* (Zukin 1989). Although the scale and impact of her study of adaptive reuse of lofts in central Manhattan was on an altogether different scale to the Christchurch situation— there are some similarities to the Lichfield lanes area.

The lofts in the SoHo and nearby areas studied by Zukin (1989) did not involve the displacement of a lower class residential population by the middle classes - but adaptive re use of obsolete commercial and industrial space. Many of the types of uses replaced were similar to those in the Lichfield lanes area, for example, clothing manufacturing and light warehousing. In both cases it could be seen as a transition of the area from an industrial to a de-industrialised and service sector economy as per Ley (1994).

The pioneer or colonising occupants in SoHo were predominantly artists in the early years – rather than the middle classes and while there were few actual artists involved in the early period of the study area in Lichfield Lanes, the occupants and businesses did have the “*boho*” and “*alternative*” style associated with an artistic aesthetic.

There is also a similar element of rejection of mainstream real estate tastes and associated lifestyles. In New York the loft market represented a type of real estate product not provided by either suburbia or conventional apartment developments. The same applies in Christchurch.

There is also the coincident economic matter of affordability – the Soho lofts were often “*bare space*” allowing the occupants to stamp their own style on the space leased, as well as using the same space in a multitude of ways – for accommodation, work and entertainment/social space. This flexibility of use, not paying for facilities and features not required and the low base rental for bare – essentially industrial space, all made the space affordable to a relatively low income market.

Another factor in common and fitting within the social movement category of theory advanced by, London and Palen (1984), is the convergence of divergent interests in achieving generally the same outcome. There are the heritage building conservationists, the property developers looking for a low cost entry to the market, the building occupants looking for a retail or residential real estate product not otherwise offered to the market and the local authority looking to make an area of the city distinctive and attractive to both local and international visitors.

Yet another similarity was the questionable legality of some of the early adaptive re use (92% of residential lofts in Zukin’s study were illegal and other studies have similar results). Also, recognition over time by both property developers and local authorities that the trends emerging were a positive opportunity, and should be encouraged and where appropriate legitimised. One difference is that there was some resistance in New York from small manufacturers to the influx of new residential uses pushing up rents and displacing this type of use. As a result there were early and not very effective political attempts to limit the type and scale of residential conversion. This was not a feature of the study area with virtually no resistance from occupants and, early on at least, little interest from the local authority.

However, the adaptive reuse that was happening in the Lichfield Lanes study area, by the time of the earthquake was belatedly perceived as very important for inner city revitalisation and widely seen in an entirely positive light. The result was that it recently received official and financial support from the city council.

This is a relatively common phenomenon. In the UK development agencies in places such as Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol and Cardiff, in partnerships with private real estate developers attempted to artificially stimulate gentrification as a form of urban renewal (Miles 2005, McGuigan 1996). In Europe examples include Bilbao (Vegara 2001) and Porto (Balsas 2004). Whereas in the USA similar public-private examples can be found in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Columbus, San Diego, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Tulsa, Raleigh, Fort Worth, Atlanta, Portland, Denver, Albuquerque and Tempe (Beauregard 2005). There are many others around the world.

Tax increment financing and other incentives are also used by local authorities in the USA to encourage to rehabilitation of city areas and were identified by Zukin (1989) as important. In some cases, any increases in tax revenues as a result of increased values are *“ring fenced”* for reinvestment into further local improvements or affordable housing initiatives.

Infrastructure improvements leading to higher property values are also used to encourage additional private real estate investment to run down areas (Murphy 2008). This was happening in the study area at the time of the Christchurch earthquakes with drainage, street surface and lighting upgrades recently completed as well as extension of the historic tourist tram route through the area underway.

The above described collaborations of the public sector with larger scale developers are often characterised as *“second stage”* gentrification and it is possible Christchurch was moving into this stage when the earthquakes struck. Both Wellington and Auckland had progressed through first stage gentrification to second and third stage *“new build”* gentrification (Morrison and McMurray 1999, Murphy 2008).

Socio-cultural aspects appear particularly relevant to the study area and of particular interest is the type of people who found the inner city lifestyle attractive. Savage, Warde and Ward (2002) describe the gentrified enclave as displaying *“some distinctive cultural characteristics in their daily activities which constitute the reproduction of social identity and, to a variable degree, social solidarity”*.

As mentioned earlier, the urban culture and lifestyle described above is at odds with the majority of the Christchurch population who are resolutely suburban. This is evidenced by the clear success of new residential subdivisions and expanding shopping malls in the city over the last thirty years, coinciding with the commercial failure of new inner city apartment developments and declining CBD retailing activity.

Zukin (1989) makes the same observations about the USA but goes on to say a small but *“increasing number of middle-class people moved into certain cultural patterns, particularly an active appreciation of the arts and historic preservation which had previously been upper class domains”*. She also discusses the increasing value associated with *“eccentric spaces”* that reflect bygone eras and add the romanticism of a way of life which has largely vanished (or can only be experienced overseas).

Some people also highly value *“raw space”* and the exciting nature of carving their own style into a space rather than receiving an already *“designed”* product. Many people find such places more flexible and interesting than post-industrial offices, apartments, suburbs and shopping centres but

they tend to be limited to non child centred households. This resonates with the second characteristic of gentrification identified by Warde (1991) that is *“Transformation in the built environment exhibiting some distinctive aesthetic features and the emergence of new local services”*. There is a greater sense of place rather than function and an increasing trend to combine living and working space (or at least have them in close proximity) in a variety of architectural styles and configurations.

However, such a lifestyle choice is not typical in New Zealand, where most new residential neighbourhoods are increasingly tightly controlled by development restrictions, both imposed by planning rules, as well as developers trying to maintain a particular style and appeal to a narrow demographic (presciently referred to by my twelve year old daughter as *“fake neighbourhoods”* and others as *“blandscapes”*). Those who find the convention, isolation and restriction of the contemporary suburban neighbourhood most repugnant may well be those most attracted to the *“edgy”* and sometimes quasi legal urban alternative.

In many ways gentrification can be seen as a return to the mixed use of a location typical of earlier cities before the influence of town planning and the zoning of activities into separate and distinct enclaves. This has led to the apparently successful revitalisation of a number of central city precincts. Zukin(1989) but debate continues on how enduring or inclusive such revitalisation will be. Recent examples closer to the Christchurch context in scale and/or culture include the Rocks area in Sydney and the lanes area of Melbourne.

In all these cases the differentiation from the alternative and predominant suburban living experience is substantial and resonates with the third of Warde’s gentrification processes (*The gathering together of persons with a putatively shared culture*) or at least with shared class-related consumer preferences. It also reflects the work of Ley (1994) and socio-cultural and community network based theories. In Zukin’s words *“small and old instead of large and new”*.

Zukin (1989) describes a trend in the middle classes to believe that old buildings and old neighbourhoods are *“authentic in a way that new construction and new communities are not”*. They have a sense of place instead of space and represent a rejection of modernist functionalism. They change and grow organically but still *“provide landmarks for the mind as well as the senses”*. She also comments that the domestication of the industrial aesthetic of obsolete industrial uses into new mixed uses encourages the adoption of an industrial style in the interests of authenticity. It can also be seen as nostalgia for a simpler more authentic past.

Other lifestyle issues discussed by Zukin (1989) include the writings of Bachelard in the Poetics of Space who said space can mean contradictory things to its inhabitants. Different people may feel at home in very different spaces and these space preferences can change over time. Tastes are also constrained by technology, materials and costs.

Zukin (1989) as well as Boddy (2007) also talk about the glamorisation of the urban lifestyle through the media. Boddy (2007) observes that the marketing material produced by the developers strongly highlights design and lifestyle: apartments are typically described as 'the ultimate in city chic' and great play is made of the access the developments offer to city-centre assets: a 'thriving, cosmopolitan centre'

Though Zukin was talking about large cities in the USA in the 1960's and 70's, and Boddy the UK in the 1990's and early 2000's this phenomenon has probably gained traction more recently in New Zealand, accelerated by decreasing affordability of suburban housing – especially for first home buyers, and increasing familiarity of an urban lifestyle by generations who have lived and worked in this style overseas (Dutton 2003). Evidence includes the wide coverage of this style of building in New Zealand magazines like Design Trends and Architecture New Zealand.

The Lichfield Lanes study area represented a particular and somewhat unique concentration of architectural style and use of traditional materials which was restricted in terms of availability in Christchurch, especially at affordable rental or purchase price levels in the CBD. For those that aspired to this particular style there were limited alternatives – perhaps best represented by the nearby port town of Lyttelton. This was undergoing a similar revitalisation/gentrification process and was similarly devastated by the earthquakes.

Another positive aspect of urban living aspect is the good social relationships between people in some intensively occupied neighbourhoods, as observed by Gans (1982) in The Urban Villagers and categorised by London and Palen (1984) under community networks theories. There is also the more recently emerging consciousness of the ecological benefits of adaptive reuse of existing resources and reducing commuting impacts by living, working and playing in close proximity.

This minority group with the socio- cultural preferences described above are often described as first wave gentrifiers (Ley 1994) and have particular importance for the rebuilding of the city post earthquake. If the very characteristics of the city that attracted this type of person to occupy CBD residential accommodation and establish and frequent business premises there have now been lost -

or are under threat- what will the future hold for the only type of inner city revitalisation that was gaining traction?

A possibility is a jump to “third wave” new build gentrification as discussed by Murphy (2008) in relation to Auckland. While sharing the same predominantly suburban culture as Christchurch, inner city gentrification in its traditional form (including displacement) has been underway in Auckland for many years. This is most notable in Ponsonby (Latham 2003).

Murphy (2008) identifies first wave gentrification – characterised by adaptive reuse, attracted by heritage building styles, smaller in scale, driven by individual gentrifiers and property developers as now being supplanted by third wave “*new build*” gentrification. This is particularly evident in the inner city and harbour side areas of Auckland. He contends that neo- liberalism and new urban governance structures, including an increasing role of the state, created the conditions for this “third wave” gentrification phenomenon. The same type of process is evident in Wellington (Morrison and McMurray 1999).

While these same national level political and related legislative factors also apply to Christchurch, their effects were not very evident in the Lichfield Lanes area pre- earthquakes. The processes underway in this location were much more of a first wave gentrification character and, at least initially in spite of, rather than because of political direction. Later, and nearby on the vacant former Turners and Growers site, the Christchurch City council attempted to initiate a joint public/private large scale “*new build*” gentrification project in a joint venture with an out of town developer- but this failed get off the ground. There have been other examples of the Christchurch City Council attempting to engage in entrepreneurial property development activities with a view to inner city revitalisation (similar to those in Auckland described by Memon et.al. (2007)and Murphy (2003)) but with a notable lack of success. Most of the increase in Christchurch residential density has not been in the CBD but via small scale townhouse development in the surrounding inner suburbs (Valance Perkins and Moore 2005 and Murphy 2008).

Traditional gentrification described as “*quaint and small*” by Boddy, (2007) is very different from the new build large scale and often corporate processes described by Murphy (2008). Only the first type was working in Christchurch pre earthquake and maybe only the second type will be a possibility post earthquake due to the destruction by the earthquake of the physical (and social) fabric in the Lichfield Lanes area.

A question to be addressed by this research is will the same people (both owners, developers and occupants) be involved or will the “displacement” – so typical of many gentrification processes but

largely missing from the Christchurch experience previously, now apply to these first wave gentrifiers. Perhaps, as Boddy (2007) puts forward, the market for new city-centre apartments and for older renovated Victorian properties tend to differ.

A likely outcome appears to be displacement of those early “colonists” more attracted to the characteristics of first wave gentrification - be they aesthetic, social and/or economic in nature. What will they do and where will they go?

There is also the issue that existing owners and occupiers may wish to take part in “third wave” gentrification – but they may not be in a position to do so. Lack of capital, insurance issues, business interruption, development expertise, increased earthquake requirements, scale issues, exclusion by the corporate and public sector, may all preclude involvement

There is also the possibility that the lack of economic viability for new build development that previously prevented the redevelopment of the Turners and Growers site, still applies – perhaps to an even greater extent- in post earthquake Christchurch.

This economic problem may relate to the fundamental shifts that have been taking place in the role of Christchurch City in recent decades. Will the earthquake accelerate and exacerbate these shifts?

Conclusion

The literature addressing gentrification is very extensive, is driven in many cases by different perspectives, ideologies, and research methodologies and reflective of the wide variety of differing circumstances in which the phenomenon may arise. As a result there is a wide range of conclusions as to the definition, causes, processes and outcomes of gentrification.

This brief review of the literature has identified major themes, some of which have the potential to prove useful in understanding of the situation existing in the Lichfield Lanes area of Christchurch prior the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. Hopefully, they will also assist in interpreting, predicting and perhaps facilitating positive outcomes for the location post earthquake.

It is clear many authors consider displacement to be an essential feature of gentrification and even though it is, to date, largely absent from the Lichfield Lanes study area, it is worthwhile incorporating consideration of the phenomenon. The other three gentrification processes put forward by Warde

(1991) are all present and greater understanding of them will help illuminate the Christchurch situation.

Of the five theoretical categories explaining gentrification proposed by London and Palen (1984) demographic-ecological, community networks and social movements groupings all appear to offer some explanation of the Lichfield Lanes situation but the socio-cultural and economic-political categories appear at this stage to resonate the strongest.

In particular the rent gap theory associated with Professor Neil Smith (1996) and the consumption side theories of David Ley (1986) appear particularly relevant to the study situation.

In-depth studies of particular cases and their backgrounds, as in *“Loft Living”* by Zukin (1989), offer a particularly rich vein of critical thought potentially applicable to the study situation. As this research project progresses no doubt further useful examples will be found in the literature.

Authors such as Hackworth (2002) and Murphy (2008) have suggested that external events such as the early 1990’s recession and neo-liberal political trends have changed the nature and in particular the primary participants in gentrification in some situations. A key question is will the Christchurch earthquakes have a similar and perhaps more dramatic and immediate effect in the Lichfield lanes area?

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