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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT:
A CASE STUDY OF
THE REDEVELOPMENT OF VICTORIA SQUARE, CHRISTCHURCH

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Sarah M. McRae

Centre for Resource Management
University of Canterbury and Lincoln College
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ABSTRACT

Public participation in the urban environment is explored with reference to a case study of the redevelopment of an area of inner city open space in central Christchurch, New Zealand. In 1986, a Christchurch developer proposed to build a 187m tower in the city's Victoria Square. Community interest groups were largely opposed to the proposal, which initially had the support of the planning authority. This study focuses on the ensuing public participation prompted by the proposal. Case study findings are generalised to the issue of public participation in the urban environment. The inner city environment is found to pose problems for participants due to the context of development within the city, and the lack of an urban constituency. The study concludes with a recommended approach to public participation in future urban development. Conclusions also relate to the value of public participation in understanding the decision making processes governing the allocation of resources within any system. Public participation provides a benchmark with which to monitor the efficacy of institutional arrangements for urban development.
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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

For many New Zealanders the urban environment is the site of their permanent home; their dominant working and living environment. Yet how many of the cities' inhabitants feel satisfied with their most immediate environment?

Integral to this study is the belief that people should be accorded the basic right to participate in the processes shaping their environment. The central question addressed by this report therefore asks whether the inner-city environment has special implications for public participation.

The importance of the urban environment as the predominant habitat, and the relative power of resident groups and individuals to influence the quality of that habitat, has already been discussed by some writers. For example, Ward (1987) argues that it is unrealistic to talk about integrating conservation with development in an urban context as the extremely high development pressure within the inner-city precludes any type of balancing process:

"(the Minister for the Environment) is seen as ... facilitator between the pressures of conservation and development, and while this stance might occasionally be justifiable in the deep rural areas of NZ, it is much more questionable in the urban centres where the pressures to develop are more acute, and where these pressures usually have the support of local councils, intent upon the short-term gains derived from increased rates." (Ward 1987:23)

The New Zealand Conservation Strategy also addresses the question of urban resource management:
"Urban Systems...Urban society has the same kind of complexity as many ecological systems. Similar dynamic processes take place and there are inflows of energy, materials and water and links to other systems such as the interaction between human settlements and rural areas. Protection of urban life support systems is as important as protection of soil or water systems. Major problems of present day urban management include social and cultural unrest, unemployment, housing, transport and lack of effective community involvement in decision making." (New Zealand Conservation Strategy, 1981:14)

More recent attention given to the question of the urban environment, and in particular peoples' impressions of it, appears in the 1988/89 Ministry for the Environment Corporate Plan:

"The environmental monitoring strategy which is to be developed by the Ministry for the Environment will identify areas for monitoring the quality of the environment. Possible areas are...Public perception of the aesthetic quality of urban environments." (Ministry for the Environment, 1988:21)

1.2 STUDY AIM

The study examines the opportunities for public participation in the decision making processes governing the urban environment, with reference to a case study of the redevelopment of Victoria Square, Christchurch.

The aim of this approach is to investigate the concept of public participation, and in particular explore whether the urban environment poses any 'additional' problems for public participation. This question is addressed through a case study using multiple data sources. These data sources are outlined in the later description of study method, in section 1.3.
1.3 STUDY METHOD

The outcome of empirical research is significantly influenced by the study method adopted. In acknowledging the importance of study design, considerable time was spent on establishing the approach of this study, before actual empirical research was undertaken. The resultant study method is discussed below in terms of scoping, case study interviews and analysis of interview results.

Scoping

An initial scoping phase confined this study to the Central Business District (CBD) of major New Zealand cities. The urban focus is based on the writer's interest in the inner city, and the problems the inner city presents for management.

Initial research into the issue of the urban environment concentrated on an appropriate resource management basis for the study. The concept of public participation with reference to a case study of urban development evolved following an extensive search of the literature surrounding the management of the urban environment. The literature initially covered in the scoping process has served as a basis for the theoretical perspectives presented in Chapter Two, and the framework presented in Figure 1.1.

An initial search of the public participation and urban environment literature pointed to a common issue, notably the issue of public participation in the urban environment (Kilmartin et al., 1985; MWD, 1978; Rapoport, 1977; Ward, 1987). Reference to past studies of both the urban environment and public participation revealed the value of case studies in relating past resource management experiences to future management options. The
relationship between these various stages in the scoping phase are represented below (Fig 1.1).

Further research into the choice of a study topic relied on discussions and advice received from town planners, architects, staff of the Centre for Resource Management, and other specialists, particularly from the field of public participation and urban resource management.

FIGURE 1.1 Conceptual framework outlining theoretical base to study approach.

The case study approach provides experience in undertaking empirical research and an opportunity to examine the factors presented in the accompanying theoretical framework (Fig 1.1). Furthermore, the use of a case study
also reflects the writer's preference for a practical orientation.

The redevelopment of Victoria Square was chosen as a case study following a process similar to that used to select the broad topic. The choice of the case study also assisted the logistics of the project, in that it was a relatively current issue that had attracted an unprecedented amount of local public interest, and was close to the author's place of residence.

**Case Study Method**

The literature and past case studies in public participation were used to identify significant issues in the fields of both public participation and the urban environment. In turn, familiarity with these issues was used to identify suitable foci for the case study.

As already mentioned, the case study relied on multiple data sources to ensure accuracy and full coverage of the research topic. These data sources were significant in maintaining the validity of case study results. Data sources included a literature review of material on the issues of the urban environment and public participation; an historical review of planning for Victoria Square, with special reference to newspaper coverage of the issue; and interviews of individual and group representatives involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square. The methodology of specific steps is outlined in more detail at the beginning of the chapters dealing with specific issues relating to the case study. For example, the questionnaire used in participant interviews is presented in 5.2 Interview Method. The method used in choosing participants to interview is similarly outlined in 5.3 Participants Involved: Who to profile?
Analysis of Case Study Results

In using multiple data sources, the case study necessitated a diverse number of complex qualitative material from a range of sources. Although many of the issues identified related to the case study, not all were pertinent to a discussion of public participation, and in particular, the issue of public participation in the urban environment.

The method for analysing case study results was therefore important in establishing an order to the mass of material available, and was established following liaison with colleagues undertaking similar analyses of qualitative data, and advice from staff at the Centre for Resource Management. Personal experience with analysis of submissions within a central government department also identified options available for analysing qualitative data, including the use of doubles charts.

1.4 STUDY STRUCTURE

The final report structure closely resembles the progression of the stages of the project. This format also represents a logical flow from Part One, in which the concepts embodied in the study are introduced, to Part Two, where the same concepts gained in Part One serve as a basis for empirical research and the case study of the redevelopment of Victoria Square. Part Two also identifies the issues to emerge from this case study.

Part Three addresses the conceptual framework developed in Part One (Fig. 1.1), relating case study findings to the general question of public participation, and more specifically, public participation in the urban environment.
2.1 SCOPE OF DISCUSSION

The following literature review is aimed at establishing a theoretical context within which to discuss the issue of public participation in the urban environment. Furthermore, the review will introduce concepts and analytical tools as a base for later analysis.

The major areas examined in relation to the urban environment include: definition of the scope of the urban environment; identification of the significant features of the contemporary city; urban sociology; and the management implications of urban form and design. These areas provide a useful background for understanding the processes at work in the urban environment.

2.2 DEFINING THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The scope of this report is confined to the inner-city central business district of the contemporary New Zealand city, although there is consideration of wider urban processes. In addressing issues relevant to the management of the inner-city, it is important to ask what makes that area so different, and what issues are included in the broad label 'the urban environment'.

Dunleavy (1981) addresses this question in relation to urban sociology, in stating that 'urban studies' may as well be indistinguishable from general social science, unless some angle limiting the scope can be found:

"...we need to completely renounce any connection between particular spatial locations (cities and towns) and urban studies. Instead we should simply define
'urban' processes as certain types of socio-economic activity which can be studied as a connected field of research wherever they are located in geographical space." (Dunleavy, 1981:2)

Dunleavy also questions the existence of an urban/rural dichotomy, claiming it to be an incorrect means of analysing and distinguishing between rural and urban processes. He insists that an integral problem faced in urban studies is distinguishing those elements which are distinctly urban from the large number of social issues which are neither specifically urban nor rural:

"This kind of distinction has nothing to do with spatial arrangements or settlement patterns; it involves separating one kind of social process from a number of others." (Dunleavy, 1981:3)

Given Dunleavy's comments, it seems that with any analysis of public participation in the urban environment it is important to seek and recognise those problems, policies and processes which appear to be peculiar to that environment.

2.3 FEATURES OF THE CONTEMPORARY CITY

"The city is a kind of coral reef, a palimpsest of values, charged with signs and signals made by distant generations, reflecting the motives which first caused people to come together..." (Middleton, 1987:17)

Cities reflect the increasing industrialization of economies, growing populations, changing technology and decreasing reliance on agricultural productivity. The growth in cities has seen a corresponding growth in the density of inner city areas. This growth has increased inner city land values and the pressure to build low cost, high rise buildings, which in turn has compromised certain architectural 'standards'.

Kilmartin et al. (1985) analyse the urban environment from a sociological perspective, and examine some of the
resources, actors and processes integral to the operation of cities. They discuss the urban property market, and surmise that the key urban resources at stake within the city are land, the built environment, social facilities and capital.

The high price of inner city land influences patterns of land use. Within the inner city environment, all available space tends to be used for productive purposes. The little land that is reserved as 'open space' is often under threat from commercial uses. Land is therefore often the subject of "speculative free market activity" (Kilmartin et al., 1985:48).

The fixed and immobile built environment is also such that it is often a constraint to urban change.

Kilmartin et al. (1985) also discuss the processes forming the inner city central business district, where the central business district is characterised by high rise buildings and a concentration of financial and government institutions:

"The 1960s was a decade in which major restructuring within the western capitalist economy began and in which financial control and decision making became progressively more concentrated within large multinational companies spanning many nation states... At the same time the financial core was centralised, productive plant was in many cases moving from the 'core' to the periphery in search of cheaper labour markets..." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:92)

Kilmartin et al. (1985) classify financiers, entrepreneurs, planners and builders as the main actors in the urban resource allocation process. The role and influence of these actors has been the subject of a study by Sandercock (1975), who, in analysing the patterns of growth in several major Australian cities, revealed that many inner city processes were dominated by a group of people who gained their power from the accumulation of wealth via
speculative activity. The power that went with this wealth was in turn used to influence inner city decision makers to make 'developer-friendly' decisions:

"The urban development process was thus not a neutral process regulated by planners and politicians acting in the 'public interest' to produce the best and most efficient allocation of land to the various members of the public, but a process which reflected the unequal distribution of power in the community and, therefore, the differential access of individuals to resources." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:98)

The role of the entrepreneur in influencing urban development is relevant to the case study. Sandercock's findings are also reinforced by Fainstein (1987) in her case study of the redevelopment of New York's Times Square:

"Development proponents, when advocating the turnover of land to users who gain the most return on their investment, generally argue that doing so is consonant with the market and represents the most efficient outcome. But in fact the intervention of government in the establishment of land values through differential taxation, subsidies and urban redevelopment schemes involving eminent domain means that a competitive market situation does not exist initially and the triumph of certain land uses over others may simply reflect the influence of powerful actors over government rather than the most efficient solution."(Fainstein, 1987:234)

Such allegations have obvious implications for a case study investigating the decision making processes controlling the extent and pattern of development in the inner city, and for examining the opportunities for public participation in the urban environment.

2.4 PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN SOCIOLOGY

Kilmartin et al. (1985) outline the three basic sociological approaches to the analysis of the urban environment.
These include the ecological approach, the Weberian perspective, and the Marxist/political economy approach.

Each of the three perspectives has been adapted and used by different writers to explore the relationships between urban social theory and urban problems and policies. The three perspectives are also significant in forming the present pattern of theoretical approaches to urban study. A discussion of the three approaches is therefore useful in identifying appropriate foci within a complex urban system, for a study of public participation in the urban environment.

**An Ecological Approach to Urban Studies**

Sometimes cited as the first systematic theory of the city, the ecological approach originated from the Chicago School of Human Ecology in the 1920s. Developed largely by Park (1952), this approach stems from the writings of Durkheim (1960). In relating his theories to the urban context, Park concludes that the most environmental change is the result of natural processes:

"The process whereby 'birds of a feather flock together' is neither rational nor conscious, but it happens to people and their activities just as it happens to plants...Inexorable and extra-human forces, including competition, dominance, invasion and succession, deeply rooted in classical economic theory, formed and governed the existence of spatially local clusters called natural areas." (Michelson, 1970:8)

Ecologists have more recently investigated the massive depersonalisation resulting from city living (Wirth, 1964; Riesman, 1961). Riesman's concept of the 'lonely crowd' has prompted more recent work into the concept 'community' within an urban context.
However, social processes are accorded little weight in Park's analysis of the city, and herein lies a major critique of the ecological approach, as it provides little insight into how the city structure can be manipulated by its occupants to meet their own ends (Kilmartin et al., 1985).

The ecological approach was subject to additional criticism with the growing belief that it failed to recognise the wider social, political and economic processes operating in the city. This criticism was particularly prevalent in the 1960s:

"...the 1960s was a period of considerable urban conflict such that it placed strain upon a set of explanations which asserted that distributions of populations and resources in space were the outcome of natural and harmonious processes." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:39)

**A Weberian Perspective Applied to Urban Research**

In response to their dissatisfaction with the explanations provided by the ecological approach, some sociologists have turned to work by Weber, and in particular his theories of domination and bureaucratisation in capitalist industrial society. This resurgence of Weber's work led to an analysis of the city as a political entity whose form had emerged in response to the values and goals of the dominant groups (Kilmartin et al., 1985).

Analysis based on Weber's work has impacted on city and national planning, and in particular the pattern of delivery of various social services. This is a point identified by Goodrich et al. (1987) in their discussion of theoretical considerations for social impact research:
"Weber is able to show how power, when stabilized by a legitimating culture, can lead to a stratification of differences among groups in society... These ideas encourage an analysis which identifies the failure of the social system to allocate natural resources, and infrastructure such as housing, education or health services, satisfactorily. Improved resource management and planning are therefore seen as the proper basis for reform, with a focus on such questions as access by different groups to the apparatus of the state." (Goodrich et al., 1987:5)

There are, however, similarities between the Weberian and ecological approach. For example, in re-introducing Riesman's concept of the "lonely crowd", Kilmartin et al. (1985) note:

"For Weber, the city was thus the setting for the domination of impersonal administrative organisation upon the personal lives of individuals, leading to the growth in impersonal relationships and the application of scientific rationality to the organisation of social life." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:40)

In other areas however, the two theories are quite disparate, with the Weberian perspective largely concerned with social processes within the city. For example, one particular concern of applicants of Weber's theory is the issue of domination:

"The modern state for Weber is, therefore, the means by which one group may impose its values on another. Those who control the state... lay claim to legitimacy for their actions, and, therefore, the masses are not so much in agreement, but rather they are subordinated by the politically powerful." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:41)

Another factor deemed significant by the Weberians include the concept of the urban manager, the name given by Pahl (1975) to the key actors involved in processes of urban resource allocation.

A critique of the Weberian perspective as applied to urban systems rests on Pahl's continued emphasis on urban managers, with little attention paid to the structure of
political and economic power within the city (Kilmartin et al., 1985).

The Marxist Approach

The use of Marxist doctrine in urban studies stems from dissatisfaction with the ecological and Weberian approaches.

The Marxist approach addresses the broader economic processes influencing the city, and the class conflicts resulting from capitalist society. The Marxist approach therefore examines city processes within a 'macro context' where "the form of the city is the result of economic processes and individuals are simply agents controlled by super-human forces" (Kilmartin et al., 1985:12). This approach is reinforced by Dunleavy (1981):

"Marxists see contemporary urban problems in the West as shaped not just by industrialization, but by specific features of capitalist industrialization. Weberian and other writers fundamentally deny this claim, pointing to the occurrence of quite similar kinds of urban problems in non-capitalist countries such as in Eastern Europe." (Dunleavy, 1981:13)

However, a number of schools of Marxist thought exist, creating mixed interpretations of what they are trying to say:

"By its failure to offer a comprehensible and 'user friendly analysis', it may (and perhaps has) guarantee the success of conservative and reactionary criticism." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:81)

Another major critique of the Marxist approach is that it presents few clues for solving the broad range of urban identified, apart from "a radical reconstruction of social order". (Kilmartin et al., 1985:ix)
Environmental Sociology and the New Environmental Paradigm

Goodrich et al. (1987) discuss the relation of the above three perspectives, to an all encompassing new environmental paradigm, which acknowledges the interactions between the social and natural environments. This link is made in an attempt to bind the seemingly disparate themes of each of the individual perspectives previously described, and to distinguish them from the new environmental sociology.

The new environmental paradigm's relevance to the issue of public participation in the urban environment can be seen in the ensuing section, where the relationship between human values and urban form is investigated as an appropriate focus for further discussion of urban processes.

2.5 URBAN DESIGN

"Mumford likened the city, in its multiple relationships, to a symphony. It has to be said half a century later, that too many players in the urban symphony have been playing in different keys, in different tempos, and often just plain out of key." (Middleton, 1987:37)

The ensuing section discusses urban design theory. Further discussion addresses the practical problems for urban resource management, from a design perspective.

Theories of Urban Design and the Study of Urban Form

Urban design and processes have been the subject of study by Cullen (1961), Jacob (1961), Lynch (1965), and Rapoport (1977).
Rapoport explores the relationship between the community and the built environment (Rapoport, 1977). He argues that the urban environment is largely a built environment, and the construction of buildings necessarily involves the incorporation of human values. Rapoport surmises that the way in which values are represented in the planning and design process is significant. This influence of human values is carried further:

"The Role of Values in Design...It follows...that the values and rule systems of different groups help understand the urban forms which their choices produce. Values thus affect the definition of problems, the data used and the solutions proposed." (Rapoport, 1977:24)

The importance of values is addressed again by Rapoport in a discussion of decision makers' assessments of management alternatives:

"...certain possible solutions are eliminated without being considered. In effect they are not part of the perceived environment of that particular decision maker." (Rapoport, 1977:25)

In discussing the meaning and significance of open or public space, especially within the inner city core, Rapoport also suggests that despite an area being deemed a public space, it may not be open to all groups due to certain community 'barriers', such as the definition of territory and certain groups exercising their preferences to remain outside that area.

In devising techniques to establish the value of open space to the community, Rapoport asserts:

"If we then see parks not being used we may conclude they are failing in their purpose, yet they may have a latent function of indicating status and value on an area, or symbolically indicating that an area is not crowded and not deteriorating. In that case the latent function of the park may...be valid even if the park does not seem to be "used" in the manifest sense of people walking in it, playing in it and so on." (Rapoport, 1977:20)
Rapoport also stresses the importance of personalising the urban environment. This emphasis is consistent with the rationale espoused by Riesman (1961), whose argument concerning the concept the 'lonely crowd' is presented earlier. Devising means by which people can be involved in the design of their environment is deemed a challenge which planners and designers must face:

"...planning and design decisions...must allow the possibilities of personalization, involvement and humanization that older environments provided and these variations must occur within some noticeable structuring framework so that they do not become chaos. Most recent designs do not provide the possibilities whereby cities can become humanized and acquire meaning." (Rapoport, 1977:380)

The work by Rapoport and others stresses the importance of the relationship that humans have with the surrounding environment. Within the urban environment, this relationship is deemed closer, in the sense that the urban environment, compared with other more 'natural' environments, is more reflective of human values.

**Urban Design - An Approach to Management**

The aim of this section is to present a brief summary of the major disciplines and professional attitudes currently influencing the quality of the urban environment.

Urban design has been cited by Beckervaise (1988), Hamnett (1988), Linden (1988), and Tibbalds (1988), as being at the forefront of urban management, and likely to be the source of major change in the style of present day urban resource management. It is therefore appropriate that a report focusing on public participation in the urban environment address the issues raised by such a discipline.
The concept of 'urban design' refers to an amalgam of professions concerned with the urban management, including town planners, engineers, landscape designers, and architects. Analogous to an interdisciplinary 'resource management course' applied to the urban environment, this new discipline is aimed at reuniting the professions.

Tibbalds (1988:13) argues that more recently the disciplines involved in urban resource management have become "separate, compartmentalised and introspective" and must be united to grapple with the problems confronted by the urban resource manager today.

Beckervaise (1988), another staunch advocate of the urban design approach, clearly enunciates some of the problems faced by the urban resource manager:

"(1) the rapid rate of change means that people see known streetscapes disappearing, and they don't like what replaces it... (3) developers no longer have a desire to achieve praise for a...high quality contribution to the public realm. Their concern is for landmark imagery - a building which stands apart, is distinctive and different. (4) the successful, corporate architects...the top priority being ability to deliver an "image" building within the project budget and deadlines. (5) planners are more often than not untrained in architecture or design, and are unable to articulate in planning schemes...what it is the city wants. In addition City Planners are becoming managers, relying on middle level staff to deal with developers and their architects, more concerned with encouraging any form of development than achieving appropriate development." (Beckervaise, 1988:4)

Beckervaise appeals to the concept "image crisis" in insisting the need for a coordinated urban design approach. Existing actors within the urban environment are said to contribute to this crisis:

"...the 'best' architects and developers have a view of what constitutes a 'high quality of design' which differs from that held by the wider community. For them high visibility, high profile, high quality finishes
are primary criteria. 'Fitting in' and being 'compatible' are low priorities. (Beckervaise, 1988:8)

Policy Implications of Urban Design

The urban design approach challenges conventional approaches to the management of the urban environment and has implications for its likely success of implementation. This assertion is reinforced by Tibbalds who, in specifying necessary attributes of the urban designer, points to changes needed to the institutional structures within which that urban designer is operating:

"They must be able to operate at a high level - a force to be reckoned with and appreciated by politicians, administrators, industrialists, developers and so on....They must be outward-looking and show due deference to the other professions and to the community." (Tibbalds, 1988:12)

Furthermore, urban design sub-disciplines, such as architecture, involve areas of information which cannot be dubbed 'good' or 'bad' with definite certainty. The interpretation of the quality of urban design is therefore quite often dependent on individual tastes. Implementing 'good' urban design is therefore faced with a major obstacle. However, Beckervaise is confident that such problems can be overcome:

"...whilst not everyone will agree on what constitutes beauty or quality, those most involved in property development will acknowledge that order, tradition, and certainty are all ingredients of it." (Beckervaise 1988:20)

Since its inception in the mid 1970s, the urban design approach has been fervently adopted by numerous modern city planning authorities. The Christchurch City Council is currently contemplating such an approach and this is detailed later.
There are however potential criticisms of the urban design approach. Tibbalds (1988) defines urban design as the physical design of the public realm, yet makes no attempt to delimit the boundaries of that realm.

The importance of community involvement in urban processes is accorded different weight by various commentators (Beckervaise, 1988; Hamnett, 1988; Tibbalds, 1988; Linden, 1988). For example, Hamnett argues that urban design education should be directed at engineers, local government managers and elected members. No further mention is made of involving community interests. It could therefore be argued that although the urban design approach may yield a considerably better result than earlier approaches, it is still a continuation of the 'we know best' attitude prevalent amongst the professions involved in urban resource management (Sandercock, 1975, Kilmartin et al., 1985).

The problems presented by urban design specialists, in terms of public participation, can be seen in the context of the participatory and technocratic distinction highlighted by Taylor and Bryan (1986). In discussing modes for obtaining a 'socially-driven process', the authors conclude:

"Technocratic approaches to development are centralized and focus on social planning and the management of impacts. Resource development is organized in a bureaucratic union of government and the private sector...Serious questions should be posed about the frequent failure to involve local groups in impact assessments." (Taylor & Bryan, 1986:12)

The distinction between technocratic and participatory processes is relevant to any discussion of public participation. It is, however, of particular relevance to the discussion of public participation in the urban environment given the tendency of urban design specialists to favour the technical solution.
2.6 CONCLUSION

A focus on some theoretical concerns of urban resource management has identified significant processes within the urban environment, and issues for public participation.

An initial discussion describing and defining cities, and in particular the inner city central business district, has helped identify the spatial focus of this study.

A description of the various schools of thought within the field of urban sociology has illustrated the historical basis to many of the urban studies today and the background to the current new environmental paradigm. In this coverage, the ecologists highlighted the 'lonely crowd'. The Weberians focussed on the importance of the bureaucracy in modern urban management and in particular the actors within that bureaucracy and decision making matrix. The Marxists emphasised the need to address the overall setting within which urban management occurs, including the national and international settings of the contemporary city.

The discussion of the theoretical and practical aspects of urban design has shown the conflicts currently faced by urban resource managers. Rapoport explored the relationship between humans and the surrounding built environment. The built environment is deemed significant as a construct reflecting the input of human values. The ways in which these human values are being addressed are examined by urban design specialists. Beckervaise (1988), Hamnett (1988), Linden (1988) and Tibbalds(1988) discuss the practical problems confronting urban design. Their continued reliance on the 'technical solution' by qualified experts, is highlighted with reference to the participatory and technocratic distinction clarified by Taylor and Bryan (1986). Such factors have implications for a discussion of
public participation in the urban environment. The significance of these factors is illustrated in later discussions.
CHAPTER THREE
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three addresses the varied interpretations of the term public participation by examining the literature relating to public participation theory and the results of a number of public participation case studies. Public participation is discussed in the context of the urban environment.

3.2 ISSUES FROM THE LITERATURE

There is abundant literature detailing public participation theory. For example, previous public participation case studies often review available literature before applying the theory to the particular case under analysis (Ministry for the Environment, 1988c; Ministry of Works and Development, 1978; Thorn, 1984). It is therefore unnecessary to duplicate those previous efforts here by undertaking a similar extensive review. The material presented below is a summary of those points from past case studies which are applicable to the subject matter of this report. Readers seeking a more in depth coverage of the public participation literature are encouraged to refer to the material cited.

The discussion deals primarily with the problem of defining public participation. Issues raised in further discussions focus on concepts such as the relative advantages and disadvantages of public participation; community power as opposed to token involvement; institutional mechanisms; and evaluative criteria.
Defining Public Participation

"In its broadest sense, public participation means the involvement of people in the making of decisions that affect their lives...". (MWD, 1978:1)

Literature examining the concept public participation is consistent in its conclusion that the term is often subject to a variety of interpretations. For example, experience of 'public participation' processes has often affected interpretation of the concept by democratically elected representatives, resource management practitioners, and the general public.

The interpretation and degree to which the concept public participation is taken seriously inevitably affects community confidence in the processes affecting the quality of the environment. This is an issue addressed by the Ministry for the Environment in their review of public participation literature:

"...there has been a marked change in emphasis from the idealism of the 1960s, when 'public participation' was seen as potentially providing the means for a fundamental change in the structures of Government...to a steadily growing cynicism in the 1970s and 1980s." (Ministry for the Environment, 1988b:2)

Further discrepancies in the interpretation and implementation of the concept arise over the extent to which public participation is advocated by supposed adherents:

"Despite the fact that the government has accepted the increasing need for public input and has increased the efforts to provide opportunities for public participation, it has not become an entrenched part of decision-making, nor has it provided the satisfactory methods and results for achieving the dialogue between decision-makers and the public." (Thorn, 1984:7)
The issue of community power in decision making processes is discussed further below.

**Advantages and Disadvantages**

In appealing to the major literature on the issue (Gresham and Crothers, 1979; White, 1982; Connor, 1982; Palmer, 1983), Thorn (1984) provides a useful summary of some of the advantages and disadvantages of public participation.

Public participation can improve understanding between decision-makers and the public, with decision makers gaining an appreciation of community opinion, and the public becoming more informed on the issues surrounding the particular case and the nature of decision making processes in general. It is also conceivable that consultation with the public identifies solutions/management options previously not thought of by the 'managers' themselves.

Thorn also concludes that public participation can have an additional intrinsic value, building up community confidence in decision making processes and a belief that they are a party to 'open-government'.

In addressing the potential disadvantages of public participation Thorn refers to work by Sewell and O'Riordan (1976) in arguing:

"participation can support inequality or alienation... [as] ... often those who do participate already enjoy a certain degree of social and political privilege" (Thorn, 1984:13).

This question of 'who participates?' is further tackled by Thorn and also addressed by the Ministry for the Environment in their review of work by Davey and Koopman-Boyden (1983):
"...many people feel powerless;...if people do not have a stake in improving the situation, they are unlikely to feel a responsibility to do so." (Davey & Koopman-Boyden, 1983:23)

The Ministry for the Environment (1988b) also concludes that the barriers to participation can be narrowed down to three broad classifications: Barriers felt within individuals; barriers related to an individual's background and social setting; and bureaucratic barriers.

Thorn (1984) cites work by Arnstein (1969) where it is argued that decision makers often view public participation as a time consuming and expensive exercise yielding negligible returns. However Thorn re-emphasises the advantages of public participation:

"...ignoring the public in the initial stages of development may turn out to be more expensive...Public involvement in the consideration of any project can be a cost-effective and necessary part of the decision-making process where the objective is to determine what is in the public interest. When the involvement appears too lengthy or unwieldy, the solution is to redesign the process, not to ignore the public views." (Thorn, 1984:14)

Finally, Thorn argues that public participation can prove a disadvantage and aggravate situations where there are obviously competing views, in which case public participation procedures usually succeed only in facilitating open confrontation.

Community Involvement - Power or Token Gestures?

"Increasingly, the public is becoming aware that decision-making at all levels is not merely a technical process carried out by 'experts' but is essentially a political process involving the making of choices which are rarely if ever made solely on technical grounds, but also involve the values and priorities of decision makers." (MWD, 1978:1)
Both Thorn (1984) and the Ministry for the Environment (1988b) examine the concept of community power in public participation procedures. Of major interest is the question of whether communities are accorded 'real power', or whether faced with token gestures. This is a point raised by Arnstein (1969) who illustrates her theory with her now relatively well known "Ladder of Citizen Participation":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizen Control</th>
<th>}</th>
<th>Degrees of Citizen Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delegated Power</td>
<td>}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placation</td>
<td>}</td>
<td>Degrees of Tokenism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>}</td>
<td>Non-participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIG 3.1 ARNSTEIN'S LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

However, Arnstein's work has been the subject of critiques by Benn (1981), Hallett (1987) and Richardson (1983), who argue:

"...the idea that participation may involve more than a simple contest for power in which it is transferred from one group to another leaving no place for the participants who had lost power in the struggle." (Ministry for the Environment, 1988b:9)

Despite this critique, Arnstein's typology does provide a useful insight into the importance of devising public participation programmes which are seen to be credible by the community.
Institutional Mechanisms

Institutions can be defined as the rules and norms governing the societal decision making. The institutions governing public participation procedures will often influence the design and outcome of such processes:

"Our bureaucratic structures are characterised by a complexity of procedures. They should be made straightforward and be seen to be fair to all. Relevant aspects include: willingness to listen...; opportunities for input...; open planning... ." (Ministry for the Environment, 1988b:18)

The Ministry for the Environment (1988b) identifies four factors significant in the adoption and practice of institutions. These four factors include: a commitment to public participation by overcoming barriers to participation, such as the availability of information; the importance of planning public participation with clear identification of goals and audience; the procedural rationality used to help overcome complex bureaucratic structures; and an assurance to that public input will be taken seriously in making the final decision.

Evaluative Criteria

"The many and varied forms of participation implemented in the last two decades, their vague expectations and often unspecified objectives make an unequivocal assessment of their impact extremely difficult." (Ministry for the Environment, 1988b:22)

In her case study of public participation in resource allocation, Thorn (1984) develops the two standards, achievement of interest group objectives and influence on a decision, with which to measure the success of public participation. Interestingly, Thorn's criteria are concerned with success from the participants' viewpoint. However, 'successful' participation by a group or individual will not
necessarily result in an outcome which corresponds to 'good environmental management'.

This particular point is also raised by Edwards, Keller and McRae (1987) in their discussion of the objectives of the Environment Act 1986, and in particular the clause which states that the Ministry for the Environment, in the management of natural and physical resources shall 'take full and balanced account of all values which are placed by groups and individuals on the quality of the environment'. In assessing this clause, they argue:

"...if the whole population of New Zealand want to turn the country into one large industrial park, then the values which they evidently placed on the quality of the environment could be taken into account, and the objective of the concept, taken literally would be fulfilled. Quite simple..." (Edwards, Keller & McRae, 1987:5)

There is an obvious confusion facing the evaluation of public participation procedures, which is made worse by the varying criteria of the various groups, decision makers and public participation researchers (Ministry for the Environment 1988b).

However, Sewell and O'Riordan (1976) identify some features to watch for in evaluating participatory processes and outcomes. These features include: the rights of access to decision making processes; the statutory rights of access to information; the role of the media; and the differing levels of public involvement allowed between public and private proposals.

3.3 PAST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CASE STUDIES

Public participation case studies present valuable lessons from past experiences. The case studies focused on are those already quoted (Ministry for the Environment, 1988b,
In her discussion of public participation process in resource allocation, Thorn (1984) focuses on the participants involved in the 1984 Rakaia River National Water Conservation Order hearing. Conclusions relate to criteria for effective participant involvement, including:

"1. experience in participation exercises;
2. access to all relevant information;
3. conventional rather than radical approaches;
4. good relations with the media;
5. prestigious figureheads or professional people within the group; and
6. dedication to the issue." (Thorn, 1984:92)

The Ministry of Works and Development (MWD, 1978) focus on public participation in planning at the regional and district planning scheme level, and planned public participation exercises by the local authorities in Wellington, Upper Hutt, Dunedin, Palmerston North, and Christchurch.

Although illustrating some useful ideas for facilitating public participation in the reviews of planning schemes, this case study does not comment on some of the broader factors influencing public participation in local authority decision making processes, such as those addressed by Thorn (1984). However, by listing and describing techniques to stimulate public involvement in local planning matters, they do fulfill their objective of providing a resource for use by local authorities. This objective of operating within the existing institutional structures controlling public participation (principally the Town and Country Planning Act 1977) may explain the absence of any substantive analysis of these institutions.

In contrast to the work carried out by Thorn (1984) and the Ministry of Works and Development (1978), the
Ministry for the Environment (1988b, 1988c) case study is not of a particular 'instance' or environmental issue. Instead, the approach used concentrates on the very general issue of public participation in resource management. This approach is for the purposes of the 1988 Resource Management Law Reform, a reform of the statutes and institutions governing the use and conservation of New Zealand's natural resources.

Major findings of the Ministry for the Environment's public participation task group are directed by the brief given them by the guiding Resource Management Law Reform 'Core Group'. The task group was comprised of official, industry, local and regional government, Maori and environmental group interests, and when first convened was asked to address a series of questions. These questions related to such things as definitions of: the benefits and relative distribution of public participation; the public interest; the role of public participation in overcoming conflict resolution; the role of information; and whether there should be limits to participation, and if so what they should be.

In trying to answer these questions, the Task Group created disparate viewpoints with which to address the questions asked. The three viewpoints, summarised as the 'Treaty of Waitangi and tino rangatiratanga', 'Property Rights/Market' and 'Citizens' Rights/Democratic' viewpoints, yielded different answers according to the assumptions within that particular philosophy.

The Task Group's method involved useful summaries of each of the approaches and in particular their implications for public participation. For example, the underlying philosophy of the 'Property Rights Perspective' was that the ability to participate is contingent on ownership of the resource. This was in contrast to the 'Citizens' Rights/Democratic' perspective:
"The Citizens' Rights perspective expects a process where all the citizens would be free to express their views directly and publicly, with the resolution of dispute handled at the political level. The Property Rights view is for this expression to be indirect through two processes: the market, and local and central government politicians...there is an unwillingness to vest decision making power in those not held accountable either through the market (or enforceable contracts) or through formal electoral processes." (Ministry for the Environment, 1988:c:16)

3.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The issue of public participation in the urban environment has been addressed by Cox (1973), Donnison (1983), Fainstein (1987), Kilmartin et al. (1985), Simmie (1974) and Troy (1981). However, the majority of these authors address public participation in the urban setting in terms of the mobilisation of community effort in the acquisition of social services. There has been little analysis of the efforts by community groups to shape their physical environment. Nevertheless, experiences from urban social action do provide lessons on the implications of an urban setting for public participation.

For example, in their discussion of social theory and the city, Kilmartin et al. (1985) discuss the history of urban community responses in Australia. Early attempts to involve the public in urban decision making met opposition based on the arguments of Arnstein (1969) and Sandercock (1975), with the community accorded little real power, and involvement viewed as a token measure:

"the urban responses sought, therefore, under this participatory phase of urban development were very much top-down ones where the 'public' were seen as the recipients or consumers of planning rather than the initiators of change...Consequently, urban responses began to change in character from participatory actions to ones of protest." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:169)
The actors to emerge from urban social movements are described as more militant than their 'participating' counterparts:

"These urban actors were more militant than those who have participated in the formalised consultative committees, and involved the development of advocacy planning in which both the planners and the planned for used 'experts' to present their cases. The demonstration that such arguments were seldom solvable on the basis of technical expertise undermined the neutrality of planners and demonstrated that they were incorporated in a social and political process." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:170)

Kilmartin et al. (1985) argue that such 'militant' tactics were successful and prompted the use of similar tactics by other urban protest groups. They further argue that the development of urban social movements has been promoted by the decreasing willingness of the state to provide certain social services.

In estimating the likely success of urban social movements, Kilmartin et al. (1985) conclude:

"The pattern, however, is one which is fragmented and where many of the groups are in opposition to each other, are transitory, and where broad based and concerted urban social movements with clear programmes of change have failed to emerge." (Kilmartin et al., 1985:184)

In her analysis of the redevelopment of Times Square, New York, Fainstein (1987) discusses the criteria used in urban decision making. She concludes that a major problem faced by urban action groups is the development of arguments which counter the present bias towards economic criteria:

"The myth that planning choices are made according to an abstract criterion of the public interest fades away in the reality of situations in which powerful actors are seeking to influence events and millions...of dollars are at stake. But neither is it true that public agencies simply respond to the
behests of wealthy developers. Rather choices are made in conformity with general criteria that provide decision rules for preferring one solution over another." (Fainstein, 1987:244)

3.5 CONCLUSION

The summary of public participation perspectives presented above has outlined the major issues confronting a case study of public participation, and in particular the issue of public participation in the urban environment.

Several major points have emerged from this discussion. These cover: the variety of definitions of public participation; the advantages and disadvantages of public participation; community involvement versus token gestures; institutional implications of public participation; and evaluative criteria for monitoring the effectiveness of public participation both in terms of process and outcome.

Public participation has been shown to have its critics. However, Thorn (1984) asserts that disadvantages of public participation can be overcome by redesigning the participation processes.

Attention can be focused on criteria for evaluating public participation processes. Evaluative criteria have been shown to differ according to the perspective of decision maker, researcher or participant, which in turn has obvious implications for a case study of public participation, and in particular the questions asked in the course of participant interviews.

Three case studies in public participation have been drawn upon, with cases ranging from the 'hands-on' district planning level, to the more theoretical work undertaken in the Resource Management Law Reform. Although the
former is directly more applicable to the case study of Victoria Square, the latter canvasses arguments inherent in gauging options for a 'better' system.

Final discussion addresses issues raised by existing work examining public participation in the urban environment. The majority of prior work is shown to focus on the experiences of urban social movements. The literature review reveals that little work appears to have been done in analysing the efforts of community interests in shaping the physical urban environment. However, work by Fainstein (1987) reveals the need to consider the grounds for the decision-criteria applied in urban resource management decision making, and in particular address means by which the current emphasis on economic criteria can be altered. The significance of these factors will be highlighted in later discussion.
PART TWO
A CASE STUDY
OF THE
REDEVELOPMENT OF VICTORIA SQUARE, CHRISTCHURCH
4.1 INTRODUCTION

Part Two of the report is divided into three chapters, each focusing on the case study of the redevelopment of Victoria Square.

The first section of Chapter Four involves a brief discussion of resource management case studies, followed by a summary of the events surrounding the redevelopment of Victoria Square, Christchurch. The remainder of the chapter addresses the institutional setting of the redevelopment of Victoria Square.

The case study methodology is discussed in more detail in later sections. Participant interviews are an integral part of the case study methodology, and discussed in Chapter Five. The case study results are presented in Chapter Six. Chapter Six concludes with a discussion of the case study findings.

Findings of the case study are generalised to the issue of public participation in the urban environment, in the third part of the study, Chapter Seven.

4.2 CASE STUDIES

Usually retrospective in focus, resource management case studies are beneficial in relating past experiences to future management.

The case study that forms the focus of this report concerns the redevelopment of Victoria Square,
Christchurch (Fig 4.1), and in particular the proposal to build a tower in the Square (Fig 4.2).

The aim of the case study is already detailed in section 1.2. In summary, the aim is to investigate the urban environment as a setting for public participation. The approach used focuses on the groups and individuals involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and particularly their impressions of the processes used by the Christchurch City Council in evaluating options for future use of the Square.

4.3 HISTORY OF VICTORIA SQUARE

The history presented here briefly identifies significant events affecting Victoria Square between 1985 and 1988. The compilation of this history has proved useful in identifying decisions made, groups involved and possible sources of information for undertaking further background research. The following history is also an acknowledgement that not all readers will be familiar with Victoria Square and 'the tower issue'. As such the history also conveys: the level of public interest in the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and ensuing tower proposal; the complexity of events; and some of the issues at stake. Public participation remains the focus of this history.

Victoria Square has a relatively well documented history, dating back to Maori times (Gardiner, 1988). Originally the site of the Puari marae, the square is better known as the site of Christchurch's original market place.

In 1877 Victoria Square was formally declared an open space "for the use of the inhabitants of Christchurch as public gardens and promenades..." (Gardiner, 1988).
FIGURE 4.1: Victoria Square, Christchurch.
Reprinted from City of Christchurch District Planning Scheme, 1986.
However, the square was not actually cleared of its array of buildings until 1896 for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. The Square was also the site of Christchurch's Civic celebrations at the turn of the century.

Considerable controversy has surrounded the management of Victoria Square in recent years. This controversy has affected the level of public participation in debates of redevelopment options for the Square.

1983: The Christchurch City Council (CCC) was granted permission by the Planning Tribunal to close Victoria Street to traffic (Fig 4.1). At the same time, the City Council felt disposed to develop the open space nature of Victoria Square, prompting the release of the document "Victoria Square: Alternatives for Discussion" (CCC 1983). This document was prepared by the CCC Project Team of town planning, architecture, traffic engineering and landscape architecture officials. Design aims of the Project Team outlined in a subsequent report (Christchurch City Council 1985b) included:
- retention of historical associations
- preservation of the best of the existing trees
- removal of intrusion by vehicles
- provision of a variety of interesting spaces with opportunity for sheltered seating areas as well as for larger formal gatherings.

1984: The Christchurch City Council revealed plans for a new hotel, The Park Royal, to be built on the closed section of Victoria Street bounded by Kilmore and Durham Streets (Fig 4.1).

July 1985: The CCC Project Team proceeded with preliminary plans for the redevelopment of Victoria Square. Public submissions were invited on these plans and received from 42 individuals and organisations. Most submissions supported the closure of Oxford Terrace to vehicular traffic; retention of the Bowker Fountain; provision of a river walkway; and retention of the Square's open, green space (Christchurch City Council 1985b).

Also in 1985, the CCC convened an 'Advisory Committee' comprised of the Canterbury Landscape Group, Christchurch Civic Trust, and Canterbury Branches of each of the NZ Institute of Architects, NZ Planning Institute and Historic Places Trust, and the North of the Square Businessmen's Association.
The aim of the Advisory Committee was to develop a design option for the redevelopment of Victoria Square. The Group was joined by Council staff and headed by Advisory Group Convener, the Deputy General Manager of Works.

December 1985: A 'Concept Plan', developed by the Advisory Committee in conjunction with CCC officials, was approved in principle and released publicly by the Christchurch City Council. The total cost of redevelopment was estimated to be $1.96m and work was to commence the following year (Bateman 1988). The proposal was said to represent "the outcome of a new exercise in public participation and community design" (CCC 1985a). At the same meeting the Project Team and Advisory Committee were instructed to develop more detailed designs of the proposed plan, to be presented to the Council by December 1986.

In November 1986, a Christchurch developer revealed plans for a 167m circular tower, costing $20 million, and including a revolving restaurant and nightclub, to be built on the corner of Victoria Square bounded by Armagh and Colombo Streets (Fig 4.2). The proposal received qualified support from the Mayor of Christchurch. The Council put the Advisory Group's redevelopment plans on hold.

20 February 1987: Further details of the tower design, uses, and costs were publicly released following a special CCC meeting in which the developers, Tourist Towers Limited, presented and defended their case. CCC recommended that the original Project Team and Advisory Committee, 'where appropriate' (CCC 1987a), be reconvened to establish how the project could be designed so the tower best fitted into the Square.

6 March 1987: CCC reconvened the Advisory Group to discuss the tower proposal.
FIGURE 4.2: The tower proposed for Victoria Square
Reprinted from: Tourist Towers Ltd. (1987b)
April 1987: CCC Deputy General Manager (Works) outlined Advisory Group feedback on the tower proposal to Policy and Finance Committee. CCC voted 16-4 to approve the tower proposal in principle and:
- granted Tourist Towers Ltd a four month option on the 550 sqm corner of Victoria Square, in which to develop their proposal;
- recommended a scheme change in which that area of Victoria Square would be rezoned from Recreation 1 to Recreation Development to allow a tower to be built;
- let tower architects work with CCC staff on a new design for the whole of Victoria Square;
- established a special Councillor sub-committee to monitor the project, negotiate financial and property matters and make final recommendations to Council.

1 May 1987: The lobby group 'Oppose the Tower' was established (known later as the 'Protect Victoria Square Society').

18 May 1987: CCC voted 12-6 to continue their support for the tower.

21 July 1987: CCC notified a scheme change which if 'successful', would allow a tower to be built in Victoria Square.

28 July 1987: Ten Christchurch City Councillors signed a notice of motion calling for CCC to withdraw their support for the tower at their next Council meeting, and forcing the withdrawal of the earlier notification of the scheme change.

10 August 1987: Subject to town planning approval, the CCC Policy and Finance Committee agreed to:
- vote to lease a segment of Victoria Square to Tourist Towers Limited. (Final leasing was subject to full CCC approval);
- recommend the scheme change be heard by three independent commissioners.

17 August 1987: As landowner of Victoria Square, CCC voted 12-7 to support the lease of part of the Square to Tourist Towers Limited. Final granting of lease was subject to a successful scheme change. CCC also voted to initiate scheme change procedures which if successful would permit the construction of a tower on Victoria Square.

25 August 1987: Scheme Change No 17, "Victoria Square-Recreation Development 2 Zone Incorporating Observation Tower and Notice of Rearrangement of Reserve Land", was publicly notified.
4 September 1987: Eleven Christchurch City Councillors confirmed their support for a notice of motion to rescind CCC support for the tower.

16 September 1987: Tourist Towers Ltd. was granted $36000 from the Canterbury Regional Development Committee, to offset preliminary project costs.

21 September 1987: CCC voted 10-9 to allow a tower to be built, but rescinded their decision to lease the land to Tourist Towers Ltd. The Scheme Change hearing was passed to three independent commissioners.

25 September 1987: Tourist Towers Ltd announced their intention to proceed with the planning application, despite having no guarantee of the lease for the site should they be successful.

29 September 1987: Town planning procedures were initiated: objections closed 4 December 1987; cross-objections closed early February 1988; hearing by Commissioners to commenced late February / early March.

27 November 1987: The Protect Victoria Square Committee were refused $15000 grant for legal and other costs by CCC Town Planning Committee.

4 December 1987: Closing date for submissions on the proposed scheme change. The CCC received 1150 submissions and objections on Scheme Change No. 17.

1 March 1988: Two week long hearing of Scheme Change No 17. by the three Commissioners Dame Ann Hercus, Sir Clinton Roper and Mr Ken Nairn commenced.

6 April 1988: Commissioners released report recommending the Christchurch City Council oppose Scheme Change No. 17.

18 April 1988: CCC elected to oppose the tower and withdraw the scheme change completely.

The history detailed above depicts an event in Christchurch's recent history in which an unprecedented number of groups and individuals became involved. In this sense, Victoria Square is an appropriate case study
4.4 THE DECISION MAKING CONTEXT

The aim of this section is to describe the institutional context of the decisions relating to Victoria Square between the years 1985 and 1988. Particular emphasis is placed on the procedural opportunities for public participation provided by these institutions. Description of the 'present system' includes coverage of the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 and the Reserves Act 1977.

Town and Country Planning Act 1977

The Town and Country Planning Act 1977 is an Act to:

"...consolidate and amend the law relating to the preparation, implementation and administration of regional and district planning..." (Town and Country Planning Act 1977: Short title to the Act).

District Planning involves the determination of land use via the Town and Country Planning Act and the district planning scheme. Every territorial local authority is required by law to prepare and administer a district planning scheme. Objectives and policies outlining acceptable types of land use in that area are specified by a scheme. The Town and Country Planning Act 1977 guides the overall administration of districts schemes, detailing their contents, and procedures for their preparation, public notification, changes and reviews, and administration.

A number of provisions contained within the Town and Country Planning Act relate to the events surrounding Victoria Square. These include:

- procedures for changing the district scheme;
- rights of objection (ie standing);
- delegation by Council to Commissioners.
Procedures for Changing the District Scheme

Tourist Towers Ltd. were unable to build a tower as of right in Victoria Square as the Christchurch City District Planning Scheme did not allow the construction of large buildings, such as a tower, in the Recreation 1 zoning of the Square. The developers therefore had to seek special planning permission to construct a building not permitted by the scheme.

Tourist Towers Ltd. would have been able to build their tower as of right had it been on a site within the Commercial 5 Zone. Tourist Towers Ltd. argued, however, that they considered Victoria Square the 'best' site, even after consideration of a number of sites around the central business district in Christchurch.

In processing the Tourist Towers Ltd. proposal to build a tourist tower in Victoria Square, the Christchurch City Council elected to opt for scheme change procedures, under s(54) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1977. This choice is in contrast to the alternative specified departure procedures outlined in s(74) of the Act. The decision to proceed this way was made on the basis of advice received from the Council Town Planning Department (Lawn, 1988a).

Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 outlines the procedures for a change to a district scheme, which are similar to those for publicly notifying district schemes when first implemented following a review. Section 44 of the Act calls for public notification of the change and the calling for submissions and objections. Public notification is deemed to include a notice published in a newspaper, plus individual notification of other persons as specified by s(25) of the Town and Country Planning Regulations.
Under s(33) of the same Regulations, the time for receiving submissions and objections shall be no less than one month after the date of public notification. In the case of Scheme Change No. 17, which if successful would have permitted the construction of a tower in Victoria Square, the period for receiving submissions and objections was approximately three months.

Rights of Submission and Objection
Not all persons are able to participate in the formal planning processes as specified in the Town and Country Planning Act 1977. Those able to participate are loosely specified in section 2(3) of the Act:

"The following persons shall have the right to object...
(a) The Minister.
(b) Any united or regional council, Regional Planning Authority, Council...or local authority having jurisdiction in or adjacent to the area to which the district scheme or application applies.
(c) Any body or person affected.
(d) Any body or person representing some relevant aspect of the public interest."

The interpretation of section 2(3) has often affected the standing of groups and individuals in front of a local planning hearing and the Planning Tribunal. The degree to which individuals are deemed to be affected or represent the public interest has often been a matter open for interpretation:

"...the real difficulty in determining who has the right to object and be heard (i.e. has status) lies in deciding what the words "affected" and "relevant aspect of the public interest" mean. There is a plethora of case law dealing with these words, all of which demonstrates that each case is peculiar to its own facts, and that it is almost impossible to predict in advance of the actual hearing who may or may not turn out to have status to object." (Palmer, 1987)
Palmer goes further to argue that the wide variety of the matters covered by the Act prohibits precise identification of groups and individuals' rights to be heard. However, he insists that the purpose of s2(3) is to set limits on the people able to be heard, stating that if the intention were otherwise then everyone would be able to object.

The matter of standing is dealt with in some length by the Commissioners hearing the tower proposal, who in their concluding report argue:

"It appears to us that the full range of objections can be considered within the evidence of those who without any doubt had legal status. It has been said that town planning legislation should be administered in a spirit benevolent to the opportunity to be heard and the Commissioners can acknowledge that principle by bearing in mind that there has been significant public concern and opposition to the tower proposal, while recognizing that mere weight of numbers is not of itself a determining factor." (CCC, 1988a)

As a result all objections and submissions relating to Scheme Change No 17. were heard by the Commissioners.

Delegation by Council to Commissioners
Recognising their vested interest in the matter of a tower in Victoria Square, and possibly perceiving a declining public confidence, the Christchurch City Council decided as early as April 1987 to pass the scheme change hearing to independent commissioners. This move is permitted under s169A(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1977:

"...Council...may appoint any person, whether or not a member of Council, to act as a commissioner to whom the Council may delegate...its powers, duties, and discretions under this Act..., for the purpose of making a recommendation to Council...".

In the event of Council rejecting recommendations made by their chosen Commissioner(s), they are obliged to rehear the evidence applying to that case (NZLR 1967).
The use of Commissioners is therefore a means of overcoming problems such as those created by the tower proposal in Victoria Square. However, there are potential pitfalls with the procedure. Council is vested with considerable discretion in choosing their commissioner(s). Furthermore, Council is not obliged to consult with other groups in the selection process. The degree to which they do act on community recommendations is at their discretion. In the case of the Tower hearing, however, the Christchurch City Council did seek community input in choosing the Commissioners.

Although renumerated for their work, Commissioners can often find the work involved demands a lot of their time and may not fit in with other commitments. The choice of Commissioners may therefore often be limited.

Reserves Act 1977

The Reserves Act 1977 provides for public reserves and such factors as their control, management, maintenance, preservation, development and use. There are seven types of reserve classified under the Act. The reserve land contained within Victoria Square falls within the Recreation Reserve category, and as such intended for the purposes of:

"...recreation and sporting activities and physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of natural environment and the beauty of the countryside with the retention of open spaces... ."
(Wells, 1984:70)

Although the majority of the tower proposed for Victoria Square was destined to be sited on the closed Victoria Street, which the Christchurch City Council owned in fee simple, parts of the structure would have encroached upon the reserve component of the Square. As such, the tower
would not have able to be constructed on this section of reserve land. The Christchurch City Council therefore proposed to apply to the Minister of Conservation for permission to exchange reserve land so that the tower would then be sited on land owned in fee simple by the Council. Application for Ministerial consent was dependent on the success of the scheme change hearing.

The procedures for exchanging reserve land are specified in the Reserves Act, and require the proposal to be publicly advertised, calling for objections. However, this calling for objections need not be duplicated if the proposed Scheme Change to the City Planning Scheme clearly identifies the exchanges to take place.

The implications of the procedures for exchanging reserve land are raised in Chapter Six, in relation to the politics involved with requests for Ministerial consent from the Minister of Conservation, and to the issue of public participation in the urban environment.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The previous discussion has detailed both the history and institutional framework pertinent to the case study of the redevelopment of Victoria Square. A knowledge of these factors is essential for a discussion and analysis of the case study, and the issue of public participation in the urban environment. These factors are addressed in the ensuing discussion of the case study findings (Chapters Five and Six) and public participation in the urban environment (Chapter Seven).
CHAPTER FIVE
VICTORIA SQUARE - PARTICIPANT PROFILES

5.1 WHY FOCUS ON THE PARTICIPANTS?

For the purposes of this report, participants are deemed to include all groups and individuals who have at some stage become involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square. Furthermore, involvement is not restricted to participation via the statutory planning process. For the case study of Victoria Square, participants are deemed to include: the developer; interest groups, including professional bodies; and affected individuals who may have acted independently from any of the above.

In terms of a case study in public participation, participants provide an obvious focus for research, representing interests who have been involved in a decision making process, and possess useful information relating to their experiences and impressions of that process. As 'users' of the system they have experiences and insights which assist in addressing questions relating to public participation.

Another focus for research within a case study of public participation is the process by which groups and individuals participated. Section 4.2 has already discussed some of the formal means by which people can participate in decision making processes governing the urban environment. However informal participation is usually taking place alongside these fixed procedures.

5.2 PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

In assessing the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and in particular public participation in the urban environment,
this case study relies on a number of data sources. The outcome of participant interviews therefore represent only one data source. Chapter Six discusses the overall case study result from all these data sources.

Participant interviews are useful in gauging people's impressions of formal and informal public participation procedures. The success of interviews is inevitably related to interview method and in particular the questions asked. Details of interview method have already been discussed in Section 1.3.

**TABLE 5.1: Participant Interview Questions**

1. Organisation (particularly in the case of interest groups)
   - membership (numbers, composition)
   - funding
   - organisational aims and objectives
   - internal organisation (delegation, representation at meetings)
   - relationship with other groups.

2. History of involvement with Victoria Square (sometimes this history was found to conflict with newspaper reports; it also drew out events which had escaped media attention).

3. Factors influencing the success of participation in the redevelopment of Victoria Square (eg 'fairness' of the process, Christchurch City Council policy and process, media coverage, level of expertise/organisation/funding, information availability/content, etc).

4. Features most influencing the outcome of the process ie the Commissioners' final decision.

5. Significance of the urban environment as a setting for public participation.

Questions asked in interviews were oriented around participant experiences and impressions of the formal and informal processes governing the redevelopment of Victoria
Square, before being extended to the general question of public participation in the urban environment. Interviews usually lasted for 1 to 2 hours and were loosely structured around the format presented in Table 5.1.

5.3 PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED: WHO TO PROFILE?

For reasons which should be obvious, not all those participating in the redevelopment of Victoria Square were able to be interviewed. A number of participants therefore needed to be isolated.

TABLE 5.2: Respondent Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTEREST GROUPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Canterbury Landscape Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Christchurch Civic Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. NZ Institute of Architects</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. NZ Historic Places Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ICON (Inner City Operation Neighbourhood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Protect Victoria Square Committee (3 people)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOPER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Spokesperson, Tourist Towers Ltd.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Deputy General Manager (Works)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Deputy City Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Councillor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CANTERBURY UNITED COUNCIL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Senior Planner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The process of choosing and eventual choice of respondents was influenced by the following:

1. the time available for field research;
2. contacts developed in initial research which pointed to potential people to interview;
3. analysis of media coverage in establishing the
pertinent actors in the redevelopment of Victoria Square;
4. a preference for a wide range of participant views eg developer, interest groups, local authority.

5.4 PARTICIPANT PROFILES OF ACTORS INVOLVED

The remainder of Chapter 5 presents a brief profile and history of involvement of respondents and representative organisations in the redevelopment of Victoria Square. The material presented is supplemented by media reports, conference papers and evidence presented at the Commissioners' Hearing. The Advisory Group convened to comment and facilitate the earlier redevelopment of Victoria Square is also described.

1. Victoria Square Advisory Group
The Victoria Square Advisory Group was formed in 1985 at the suggestion of the Christchurch Civic Trust et al. (1985). The Christchurch City Council decided later to add the North of the Square Businessmen's Association.

The role of the Advisory Group was to advise the City Council on design options for Victoria Square. These options were to comply as far as possible with the following design aims:

- limiting buildings to those necessary for the use of Victoria Square;
- retaining the best existing historic features in the Square;
- developing stronger visual and physical links between Victoria Square and the surrounding public and private spaces.

Participation in the Advisory Group was on a voluntary basis. Meetings were conducted during work time. Advisory Group members with other commitments were
expected by the Christchurch City Council to make up that time in their own hours.

When the Tower was proposed, the Christchurch City Council had already formally approved the Advisory Group design plan for the redevelopment of Victoria Square. Work on this plan was then put on hold following the tower proposal.

In early 1987 the Christchurch City Council reconvened the Advisory Group to comment on the tower proposal. However the Group was advised by CCC Deputy General Manager (Works) that:

"The specific issues which the Advisory Group are required to address are NOT the broad issues of (the tower's) desirability overall, but whether or not it can be effectively integrated into the Square." (Sheppard, 1987)

Given their restricted brief, some Advisory Group members issued public statements voicing their opposition to a tower in Victoria Square and also to the process used by the City Council.

Although there were splits within the Group about whether to accept the revised brief or not, they did conclude that further work was needed in assessing the visual, traffic and psychological impacts of the tower. These conclusions were reported to Council. However, some Advisory Group members were not satisfied that the Christchurch City Council had satisfactorily investigated the potential landscape impacts of the tower (Moore, 1988).

The Advisory Group was also dissatisfied with the way the City Council Tourist Tower Project Team had communicated the Group's ideas to Council and some members publicly stated this concern:

"It is important to stress that the Group made no statement supporting the location of the tower in the
Square nor did it imply support...It is unfortunate that subsequent Council statements and publicity on the matter have linked the Group with support for the tower before the additional information is provided and fully evaluated." (Sheppard, 1987:2)

2. Canterbury Landscape Group

The Canterbury Landscape Group (CLG) has been in existence for 14 years and has a membership of 45 people. Of these members, approximately 80% are qualified landscape architects. All involvement by group members is on a voluntary basis.

The aim of the CLG is "to promote landscape awareness and understanding within the Canterbury region, through regular informal meetings, field trips and correspondence to local authorities and the media" (Canterbury Landscape Group, 1988).

Group activities are funded through member subscriptions and entry fees for CLG arranged events. CLG Committee members hold further meetings to discuss the group programme, finances and current landscape issues.

The CLG was involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square since 1985 when the Christchurch City Council first called for submissions on possible design options for the Square. In response to this call the CLG held a one-day workshop to investigate possible designs for the Square.

The Canterbury Landscape Group was further involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square in 1985, with the formation of the 'Advisory Group'. The CLG was opposed to the tower throughout the 'tower debate'. Although they expressed this to the Advisory Group, they still believed their opposition was not clearly communicated to the Council.
The Canterbury Landscape Group was active in their opposition to a tower in Victoria Square and collaborated with other groups opposing the tower, including the Protect Victoria Square Committee, the Christchurch Civic Trust and the Canterbury Branch of the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects. This collaboration involved joint press statements, publicity exercises, and the collection of signatures for a petition opposing the tower.

With the notification of Scheme Change No. 17, and the subsequent call for submissions by the City Council, the Landscape Group undertook an extensive and relatively costly computer based visual impact assessment of the tower proposal. This assessment was based on a suspicion that the developer's architectural drawings of the proposed tower did not present a true picture of the tower. The CLG argued that its assessment substantiated this suspicion.

The cost of the visual impact assessment was covered by donations from group members or sympathisers. In some instances donors requested that their contribution remain anonymous, for fear of retribution from the city 'establishment' of business interests and decision makers.

The results of this assessment were presented as evidence in the Commissioners' hearing of submissions and objections of the Scheme Change. A member of the group presented this evidence. The group was unable to afford legal counsel. In opposing the tower, the Canterbury Landscape Group objection was that:

"...the tower, its base building and service facilities will have an unacceptable visual impact on the open space qualities and amenities of Victoria Square... ."  
(Canterbury Landscape Group, 1988:1)
3. Christchurch Civic Trust

The objective of the Civic Trust is to ensure that Christchurch and surrounding areas maintain their functional and aesthetic character.

Constituted under the Charitable Trusts Act 1975, the Christchurch Civic Trust consists of 21 elected Board members and 217 affiliated members. Election to the Board is at the discretion of the existing Board members. The Trust’s work is funded by membership subscriptions. Benefits from the Trust’s work are seen to accrue to the public at large, as well as to the 'good' feeling members derive from undertaking Trust work.

Active in the Advisory Group, and throughout the tower debate, the Trust’s involvement in Victoria Square originated with the initial call in 1985 for submissions commenting on redevelopment options for the Square.

Following the release of the Tourist Towers Ltd. proposal for a tower in Victoria Square, the Civic Trust agreed in Committee to oppose the tower. However, Civic Trust involvement with the Advisory Group was hampered as their representative was forced to stand down due to unforeseen circumstances at the same time the tower was proposed. Although the Trust sent another representative to Advisory Groups meetings, they failed to be recognised as having voting rights by the Group's 'Convener', CCC Deputy General Manager of Works.

In May 1987 the Trust convened a public meeting to discuss the tower issue. Spokespeople representing various interests in the tower debate, including the developer and Christchurch City Council officials, were invited to speak. Approximately 150 people attended. The meeting resulted in 'overwhelming' support for objecting to the tower (Findlay, 1988).
The Trust continued to be involved throughout the 'tower debate', making occasional press statements, and joined some of the activities arranged by the Protect Victoria Square Committee.

The Civic Trust went on a 'membership drive' during the tower issue, as at that stage the Christchurch City Council was contemplating restricting those able to place objections or submissions. The Civic Trust saw itself as an organisation whereby people outside of Christchurch and/or less sympathetic to the more 'radical' views of the Protect Victoria Square Committee, could be involved and assured of standing before the Commissioners' hearing of Scheme Change No 17.

The Civic Trust presented their own evidence at the Commissioner's hearing.

4. NZ Institute of Architects (Canterbury Branch)

The New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) is the professional body representing approximately 1000 architects nationwide. The Canterbury Branch of the Institute has approximately 140 members.

The NZIA is funded by member subscriptions. Regional branches receive a proportion of the national allocation of funds. The benefits that members receive in return are said to include the development of professional contacts and the networking of ideas (Sheppard, 1988).

The Canterbury Branch of the NZIA was first involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square as a member of the Advisory Group. Given the Advisory Group's revised brief for commenting on the tower, the NZIA reaction differed to that of the Canterbury Landscape Group and Christchurch Civic Trust. Although opposing the tower, the NZIA felt this opposition could be communicated within the revised brief.
Following the disbandment of the Advisory Group the NZIA continued to actively oppose the tower. For example, the NZIA participated at meetings convened by the Civic Trust and the Canterbury Promotion Council to discuss the tower.

In August 1987 the Branch surveyed their 134 eligible members to gauge their impressions of the tower proposal. Replies were received from 87 of those surveyed and the results can be summarised as follows:

"-89.5% were not in favour of the proposed tower in Victoria Square
-63% were opposed to the tower being sited elsewhere in the central business area
-77% were opposed to the tower being sited on any public open space." (Christchurch City Council, 1988a)

The Branch was further involved in presenting evidence at the Commissioners' hearing in 1988.

5. NZ Historic Places Trust (Canterbury Regional Committee)

The Canterbury Regional Committee of the Historic Places Trust is staffed by volunteers and one of 19 regional committees throughout the country. These Committees act as regional watch dogs for their permanently staffed parent organisation in Wellington. Regional Committees are funded by an annual government allocation to the Trust's Head Office which then allocates funds according to the number of Associate members in each region. The budgets of the regional committees can be supplemented by fundraising activities and the occasional bequest.

There are approximately 3000 associate members of the Historic Places Trust in the Canterbury region. There are 8 elected members on the Regional Committee. Not all Committee members have a professional interest in the historic place preservation; some are attracted through personal interest.
Also involved with the Victoria Square Advisory Group, the Canterbury Branch of the Historic Places Trust was opposed to the concept of a tower only if it were to be in Victoria Square, which they believed had important historical associations with early Christchurch. The Trust summed up its stance as 'the shift the tower' campaign.

The Trust representative on the Advisory Group was unable to continue his involvement in the tower debate due to family commitments.

The Historic Places Trust did, however, continue to be involved in the tower issue. Members of the Regional Committee spoke at various public meetings convened to discuss the tower. The Trust presented their own evidence at the Commissioners' hearing.

5. I C O N  (Inner City Operation Neighbourhood)
ICON is an inner city neighbourhood networking group representing the City of Christchurch District Planning Scheme Zone R5A, which covers the area roughly between the central business district of Christchurch and Hagley Park. ICON is concerned with stopping the loss of residential amenity and use in that area, from the encroachment of commercial uses into the zone. They would like to see the area preserved as a residential neighbourhood. ICON is active only in the R5A zone. A lack of resources prevents otherwise.

ICON has a loose membership of approximately 20 to 40 individuals. People from outside the zone are able to join the group. There is no formal organisation. Most organisational details are carried out by a voluntary secretary and a core group of committed individuals. The group does not seek a higher degree of organisation as members tend to be relatively individualistic and this would 'cramp their style' (Hollobon 1988). ICON tends to act on
issues concerning them only when there is a consensus amongst the core group. Otherwise members participate individually.

When first established, ICON received a funding grant from the Christchurch City Council. Official recognition as a neighbourhood group has conferred status in the planning arena; ICON members occasionally meet with Councillors and Council officials and are notified of planning issues relating to the central business district and the R5A zone.

ICON was first involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square in 1983 when the City Council tried to close Victoria Street to traffic. Objecting to the possible traffic effects on Armagh Street (parts of which fall within the R5A zone), ICON were deemed by the Planning Tribunal as unlikely to suffer any injury as a result of the street closure. The Planning Tribunal concluded the only party likely to suffer injury were some Armagh Street residents, who happened to belong to ICON, but had also objected to the proposal as individuals (Planning Tribunal 1984).

ICON was involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square in 1985 when members presented a submission to the City Council on design options for the square. However ICON's core group decided they would not become further involved in the tower issue which was regarded as something affecting all of Christchurch. ICON believed they would be able to show very little loss of residential amenity as a result of the tower and therefore saw little point in objecting. Individuals within the group did, however, get involved separately.

6. Protect Victoria Square Committee

The Protect Victoria Square Committee was established in May 1987 in direct response to the tower proposal. Spearheaded by two City Councillors, this organisation is reported to have gained an immense following throughout
the tower debate. The group was originally called 'Oppose the Tower', but later changed the name to encompass more interests. The Group is reluctant to divulge their exact membership. The Committee itself was comprised of a 'hard core' of approximately 30 people and funded by donations from individual and group interests.

The Committee represented an amalgam of individuals with diverse interests and a wide range of experiences in previous town planning matters. These individuals were opposing the tower for a variety of reasons. The over-riding aim of the group was to prevent any private development in Victoria Square.

In attracting new members and also drawing attention to reasons for opposing the tower, the Protect Victoria Square Committee undertook a series of publicity exercises. These included a public rally in the Square itself and the spreading of black polythene over Cathedral Square to represent the extent of shadow that would be cast from the tower. The Committee was also instrumental in gathering 6000 signatures for a petition opposing the tower proposed for Victoria Square. This petition was presented to Christchurch City Councillors in August 1987.

Also in August 1987, the Group unsuccessfulely applied to the Christchurch City Council Planning Committee for a $15 000 grant to fund their activities.

The Committee was also concerned at the quality of information provided by the City Council in publicising Scheme Change No. 17. The Committee felt the notice did not adequately address the potential effects of the tower and motivated to prepare the alternative notice already described in 5.4. In response the Committee prepared an information kit which they believed clarified the issues. The kit was circulated to schools, the CCC planning desk and other contacts for further distribution.
The Committee also placed advertisements in the major Christchurch newspapers encouraging people to become involved in the issue and fill out and return the CCC objection forms they had reprinted. These objections were then presented as part of the Protect Victoria Square Committee's evidence at the Commissioners' hearing of the case.

The Protect Victoria Square Committee was the only interest group opposing the tower to be represented by legal counsel at the Commissioners' hearing. The Group were doubtful whether this legal representation would have been sustained had the case gone to the Planning Tribunal.

7. Tourist Towers Ltd.
Tourist Towers Limited had the single objective of building a tower in Victoria Square. The Company represented the interests of five business people who had no previous experience in forming a Company. The five directors believed that inner city Christchurch needs reviving and the tower would achieve this. They also believed the tower would yield economic benefits which would accrue to the people of Christchurch.

Tourist Towers Ltd. first approached the Christchurch City Council with their proposal in late 1986. By that stage they had already prepared some of the finer architectural details of the tower. The Company believed that the lease negotiated for the proposal did reflect current commercial rates. In addition the CCC was to receive between 1 and 5% of the profits earned from the tower.

In September 1987 Tourist Towers Ltd. received a Regional Development Grant of $36000, from the Canterbury Regional Development Committee. Organisations bringing a new project which is likely to be of benefit to the region
are apparently eligible for the Department of Trade and Industry administered grants.

Tourist Towers Ltd. was represented by legal counsel at the Commissioners hearing in March 1988. The company also provided thirteen witnesses, including one of its directors; the architects, engineers, and planner for the proposal; the person responsible for the environmental impact assessment; an economist; and a psychologist.

5.5 CONCLUSION
The participant profiles presented above outline the history of involvement of the some of the main participants in the decision making processes surrounding the redevelopment of Victoria Square. This history also conveys some of the major features affecting the level of participation of these groups in the Square's redevelopment. For example, not all groups are equally resourced for participation in the planning process. The potential significance of factors such as resources, collective action problems, and the design of participatory processes, are discussed in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER SIX
CASE STUDY FINDINGS: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes and discusses a number of common issues for participation in the redevelopment of Victoria Square. These issues emerged as the case study progressed, and relate to the experiences and impressions conveyed by the participants interviewed. The material presented is supplemented by media reports, letters to the editor, and other reports of the issue. The section concludes with a statement of the case study findings. This statement serves as a useful introduction to Chapter Seven and a discussion of public participation in the urban environment.

6.2 ISSUES IN THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SQUARE

The redevelopment of Victoria Square has to be seen in the context of surrounding developments, including the closure of Victoria Street in 1984 and the construction of the Park Royal Hotel on the corner of Victoria Square bounded by Kilmore and Durham Streets (Fig 4.1). Furthermore, the precinct surrounding the Square is currently experiencing a major boom in development with the construction of numerous highrise office blocks, and hotels to cater with the predicted boom in tourist numbers.

The Park Royal

During the case study it became evident that members of various interest groups perceived a 'secret' deal between the Christchurch City Council and the Park Royal chain in
securing the site now occupied by the Hotel. Comments were made by several individuals that the possibility of a 'deal' had prompted themselves and others to become involved further developments affecting Victoria Square. One respondent believed the Christchurch City Council decision to convene the Advisory Group was influenced by their handling of the Park Royal issue.

Inner City Open Space

The developer questioned the need to conserve Christchurch's inner city open spaces, especially considering the expanse of open farmland surrounding the city. The tower's effect on the open space character of Victoria Square was therefore not an issue for him (Tulloch, 1988).

6.3 ADVISORY GROUP

The Victoria Square Advisory Group had significant input in the original design plans for Victoria Square. However, as outlined in Chapter Five, this input was curtailed shortly after the tower was proposed. The impressions gained by Advisory Group members, and outsiders viewing the process, are detailed below.

Advisory Group Role

The role of the Advisory Group was an issue for some respondents, as it does not appear to have been clearly specified. It is difficult to gauge whether the Advisory Group was representative of the 'public interest', or a means for the City Council to extend its professional advice.
Advisory Group Organisation

Comments by respondents relating to the conduct and organisation of the Advisory Group offer valuable advice for future participants and organisations contemplating similar exercises. For example, the lack of any minute taking influenced the degree to which the Advisory Group's interests were conveyed to the Christchurch City Council, and later became the basis of a dispute between some Advisory Group members and City Council officials.

Furthermore, the Group met in business hours. Group members received no compensation for the sacrifice of their work time, and potential representatives were possibly excluded because of meeting times. The conduct, time and venue of similar group meetings are therefore important considerations when contemplating similar exercises.

Impact of Restricted Brief

Some past members of the Advisory Group were dissatisfied with the restricted brief given to them by the City Council to appraise the tower proposal. They argued this brief was so restrictive as to render their advice almost useless. This treatment has left lasting negative impressions of consultative processes and the policies of the Christchurch City Council. The majority of the Advisory Group members interviewed said they would be hesitant to participate in similar processes in the future. These impressions indicate the importance of public bodies, such as the Christchurch City Council, not only embarking on 'public participation', but also being committed to it, and willing to accept the product of that process.
Representation of Advisory Group Recommendations

Some Advisory Group members expressed dissatisfaction with the way their views had been misrepresented by the Convenor of the Group, in a report to Council, in which it was suggested the Advisory Group supported the tower proposal. They attributed this misrepresentation to the bias of some of the Council Officers working with the group. In trying to rewrite meeting recommendations in their own time, Advisory Group members found it difficult to arrange meetings which they could all attend.

Advisory Group Dissolution

One respondent and member of the Advisory Group believed the Christchurch City Council, when faced with the option of a tower in Victoria Square, preferred to 'neutralise' the Group when their views no longer coincided with those of the Council. The same respondent described this as a 'galling' experience, where he felt he had wasted a lot of time in attending meetings. He would be more cautious if ever asked to participate in a similar exercise again. The design product represented the investment of many professional hours whose advice the CCC had obtained virtually free of charge. The fact that Advisory Group meetings were conducted in business hours also meant that Group members had to make up their work time later on.

Status and Quality of Advisory Group Design Plan

Some participants expressed concern at the status of the so-called 'formally approved plan' developed by the Advisory Group, which the Council was not bound to implement.
A few respondents also commented on the quality of the Advisory Group's formally approved design, arguing that it was a 'design by committee', where in trying to please all interests the Group had failed to produce a dynamic design which may have resulted had it been the responsibility of one person:

"The proposal won general acclamation from the public and the media and this was undoubtedly helped by the fact that each of the organisations represented in the group had been briefed by their representative and the organisation as a whole was supportive. This sounds almost ideal. But what compromises were made to ensure common support from these powerful interest groups? Perhaps this degree of participation could be called:

"A multi expert compromise." "

(Surtees, 1988a:5)

However, the Historic Places Trust representative commented that the fact that the plan may seem flawed now wasn't necessarily the result of the process by which it was arrived at. It was inevitable that the design looked different today following the high degree of public interest initiated by the tower debate (Lockhead, 1988).

Comment

The experiences of the Advisory Group convey the impression that the City Council was only committed to public participation, using procedures such as the Advisory Group, when the issue at stake was not significant in terms of commercial development. In cases such as the original redevelopment of Victoria Square, the Council had not been trying to attract a major investor in a prestige project, in which case they could afford the luxury of extensive public participation.

Public bodies, including the Christchurch City Council, should perhaps be mindful of comments made by the
representative of the Historic Places Trust, who argued that public bodies undertaking public participation had to be scrupulous in the way they handled it. He was adamant that a public authority has to ensure they do not create the impression they are walking away from a public participation programme when it no longer suits them to have that input (Lockhead, 1988).

Such impressions have serious implications for community faith in future consultative processes used by the Council.

6.4 CCC POLICY AND PRACTICES

The Christchurch City Council was a major actor in the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and more specifically the tower issue. The majority of participants interviewed expressed scepticism at the Council's handling of the 'tower debate', believing some Council Officers and Elected Officials were biased towards the tower, and to development in general. This study does not intend discussing whether this lack of confidence is well founded or not. However, it is apparent that the damage to the City Council's image may have long lasting effects on public perception of Council policies and affect participation in future activities.

Council Assessment of the Tower Proposal

Four respondents believed some Council Officers were convinced the tower would go ahead and were extremely arrogant whenever challenged about it. One of the four commented that Council officials supporting the tower seemed duty bound to defend their professional judgement that the tower would be good for Christchurch, and reluctant to back down from their original stand. This
person also commented that the Council seemed out of touch with what the community wanted.

Another respondent remarked that the Council's desire for development appeared to outweigh any desire to investigate the merits of the tower, and forced suppression of work from Council officials arguing to the contrary. The same person questioned whether this desire was ever well considered, given the Council's handling of the tower proposal.

Suppression of Information

Four of the participants interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the suppression of the CCC Sr Landscape Architect's assessment of the tower in early 1987.

Commissioners Hearing

Just under half the respondents believed Council Officers had been obstructive to people at various stages of the tower debate, and particularly so at the Commissioners' hearing. People wanting to present evidence at the hearing were instructed they would be formally notified of a time to do so. No such notification was ever received. Most objectors had other work commitments and couldn't afford to sit through the two week hearing. Respondents believed their evidence was more likely to be taken seriously if presented in person.

The Exchange of Reserve Land

Several respondents objected to the process governing the exchange of Victoria Square's reserve land, which was
necessary for the tower to proceed, and required the consent of the Minister of Conservation. The Christchurch City Council left their application for Ministerial consent until after the planning procedure. Respondents believed that had the scheme change been approved the Minister of Conservation would have been pressured to grant consent, and that this tactic was a deliberate political ploy.

Comparisons With Past Processes

The Canterbury Landscape Group believed the degree to which the Christchurch City Council undertook public consultation with the redevelopment of Victoria Square was an improvement on its performance in negotiating the Park Royal 'deal'.

City Council Self Image

Surtees (1988a) summarised the public participation procedures employed by the City Council in the redevelopment of Victoria Square into a range of public participation 'techniques', including: 'the council knows best'(the Park Royal); 'a multi expert compromise'(the Advisory Group design plan); and 'the people know best'(the tower). However, the case study indicates that public opinion is not consistent with these conclusions, and Council Officials may be out of touch with community perceptions of Council activities.

Comment

The Council played an important role in the administration of the processes governing the management of Victoria Square. Case study results indicate a loss of faith by community interests in the Christchurch City Council's
impartiality. Significant features relate to the apparent conflict of interest within an organisation with responsibility for both commercial and planning functions. This observation has potential implications for the ongoing reform of local and regional government.

The case study also indicates the power of the individual within an institution, with implications for those institutions purporting to be advocates of public participation. Local bodies may be unaware of the impression of power they convey to the rest of the community. The case study indicates that community interests resent this barrier, particularly as Council activities are largely funded by ratepayer funds.

6.5 INFORMATION

Information and its use plays an important part in resource management processes (Peters, 1988). The availability, content, certainty and use of information was also an issue in the redevelopment of Victoria Square.

Access to Information

Members of the Protect Victoria Square Committee commented that much of their success was dependent on the two City Councillors who belonged to the Committee. These Councillors had access to the latest information regarding the tower issue, and were able to clarify the issues and proceedings to group members and the general public.

The perceived suppression of information by the Christchurch City Council has already been briefly considered in Section 6.4.
The Deputy City Planner argued that information overload was often a problem for City Councillors and that when working in a complex bureaucracy, such as the City Council, too much information can confuse the picture. Someone therefore had to decide how much information to present to decision makers (Lawn, 1988a).

The Christchurch City Council Deputy General Manager of Works also commented that information was an important factor when first approached by the developer about the tower, in late 1986, as he had to decide whether the Council support the proposal without complete knowledge of potential public reaction. He also commented that he would like to have had the opportunity to travel overseas to see other towers before finally making up his mind (Surtees, 1988b).

Quality of Information

Interest groups fulfilled a relatively important role in the tower proceedings, often undertaking countervailing analyses of the information provided on the tower proposal, and therefore challenging the 'conventional' wisdom of both the consultants to the developer and the professional staff of the Christchurch City Council.

For example, the Canterbury Landscape Group undertook an 'alternative' visual impact assessment of the tower proposal's likely landscape impacts. This material was presented as evidence at the Commissioners' hearing. Also concerned at the quality of information provided by the City Council in publicising Scheme Change No. 17, the Protect Victoria Square Committee prepared the alternative notice already described in section 5.4.

One respondent commented that the information forwarded by consultants to the developer was generally of a poor
Standard. A lot of the material presented throughout the course of the issue, and at the Commissioners' hearing of the case, implicitly supported the tower proposal. However, information was often couched in technical terms and few lay people felt empowered to challenge it. In commenting on the role of the consultant, the developer argued that his priority was the best professional information and consultants were not instructed with any directive to support the proposal.

The role of consultants was also addressed by the CCC Deputy City Planner, who argued that consultants are advised to maintain their professional standards otherwise they risk losing credibility in front of such bodies as the Planning Tribunal (Lawn, 1988a). However, he conceded that the consultant is placed in a difficult situation when in the employ of a developer. He was confident that it is possible to present objective and professionally based advice on issues such as planning and landscape assessment.

The Historic Places Trust representative commented further that people have difficulty visualising a plan, emphasising the importance of accurate information (Lockhead 1988).

Representatives of the Protect Victoria Square Committee questioned whether the revenue expected from the tower would eventuate. This concern was substantiated by the apparent conflict between the appraisals of the tower's economic impacts by consultants and independent assessors.

Comment

The importance of access to quality information on the redevelopment of Victoria Square was encapsulated by one respondent who believed the information relating to the tower development was confused by 'Council antics' and associated media coverage. The public were therefore left
with a confused picture of what the Council had decided, and some thought the issue was over when, in August 1987, the Christchurch City Council withdrew their approval for the lease of part of Victoria Square to the developer, Tourist Towers Ltd.

6.6 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

The issue of media coverage is inextricably linked with the preceding discussion of information in section 6.5. However, it is discussed here following respondents' detailed comments on the role of media coverage in the redevelopment of Victoria Square. For the purposes of this discussion, media include newspapers, radio and television.

The Role of the Media

The redevelopment of Victoria Square, and in particular the tower issue, received extensive media coverage. In discussing the purpose served by this coverage, respondents were unanimous in their belief that the media had a significant role in publicising the issue. Furthermore, the media were significant in shaping public opinion and ultimately the degree to which people became involved.

Media Bias

The case study indicates generally mixed impressions of the extent of media bias.

The Protect Victoria Square Committee encountered problems in getting permission for advertising their cause in Christchurch shopping malls, when these same malls were allowing the developer to display publicity material related to the tower.
Another of the participants interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of a Christchurch Radio Station which had sought a stamped, addressed, envelope from only those individuals supporting the tower. These envelopes were later stapled to objection forms and presented as evidence at the Commissioners' hearing.

Public Relations Expertise

A member of the Protect Victoria Square Committee believed the developer's greater level of media coverage, compared to interest groups, reflected his expertise in public relations rather than any bias in the media coverage.

Comment

The case study shows the media have an important role to play in publicising the issue and shaping public opinion. The case study also reveals that a major factor influencing coverage of the issue was the experience of respective groups in undertaking promotional and public relations exercises.

6.7 COMMISSIONERS - THE HEARING PROCESS

The Council opted for the Commission process in recognition of its own conflict of interest in the issue, and because Councillors had declared themselves into two camps over the tower issue (Lawn, 1988a).
Choice of Commissioners

Respondents expressed satisfaction with the Christchurch City Council's consultation with community groups in choosing the Commissioners.

Impressions of the Commission Option

The option of using Commissioners to hear the scheme change evoked favourable responses from all participants interviewed. However, perception of the process is likely to have been influenced by the outcome, which was favourable for the majority of groups interviewed. Respondents commented that the use of Commissioners restored their flagging confidence in the decision making processes governing Victoria Square.

Conduct of the Commission Hearing

Several respondents were grateful to the Commissioners for acknowledging that community groups often had few resources. They believed the Commissioners 'really listened', and were sympathetic, interested and pleasant, particularly when the evidence was well researched and presented 'from the heart'.

The developer had few criticisms of the process except that following the hearing there was no right of appeal, which was unusual for a planning hearing. He also believed the matter was decided on a matter of opinion and not on facts. There had been no right of cross examination in the hearing process, and his counsel was therefore unable to challenge people's evidence. In conclusion, the developer said the evidence of the professional had been overwhelmed by the individuals, and the wide brief of people deemed to be affected meant the
proposal was rejected on the weight of public opinion rather than facts.

Furthermore, the developer believed that in the process of a planning hearing the credentials of people participating needed to be examined and their evidence evaluated accordingly (Tulloch, 1988).

Hearing procedures were an issue discussed by the two Christchurch City Council officials interviewed. They explained that at planning hearings there are no legal rights of cross examination, although the actual procedure will vary from case to case. Whoever is conducting the hearing will usually mediate questions between parties. However this is at their discretion and is often influenced by the manner in which people behave at the hearing.

Those Deemed to be Affected by the Tower Proposal

The two CCC officials interviewed also explained that the wide brief of people deemed to be affected by the tower proposal, and therefore allowed to present evidence at the Commissioners' hearing, was decided by the Commissioners following CCC planning advice.

Some interest groups had feared that if the tower proposal had gone to the Planning Tribunal, the process would have been biased towards the developers, who with their 'legal big guns', would have emphasised the 'usual narrow definition' of those deemed to be affected by the proposal and therefore eligible to present evidence within the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1977. This fear was substantiated by the Sr Planner of the Canterbury United Council (Versteegh, 1988).
Comment

The commission process appears to have redeemed the Christchurch City Council's flagging reputation regarding its impartiality and commitment to public participation. Participants were also impressed with the method by which the Council chose the Commissioners. This finding can be related to the use of similar processes elsewhere. The case study also indicates how people like to be treated when participating in the planning process, and in particular at the hearing stage. Examination of planning hearings also indicates the variability of procedures.

Case study findings also raise the issue of who has the right to participate, and whose evidence should be taken seriously in the course of the planning process.

6.8 DISCRETION IN DECISION MAKING

Throughout the redevelopment of Victoria Square there are a number of points where the Christchurch City Council, and in particular Council Officials, exercised discretion in the administration of the planning process. These points of discretion include: the City Council's decision to use the Commission process; the eventual choice of Commissioners; deciding those deemed to be affected by the proposal and therefore able to participate in the 'formal' planning process; and the choice of scheme change procedures, as opposed to a specified departure.

Decisions more attributable to Council Officials included the decision by Senior Officials to withhold the CCC Sr Landscape Architect's report opposing the tower from City Councillors, and thus convey the impression that there were no professional objections to the tower.
The local body election process is such that Councillors are deemed accountable for their actions. Yet discretion exercised by Council Officials delimits transparent processes, where the public can monitor the performance of public institutions and officials are able to escape democratic accountability.

Comment

Discretion of the consent authority in the design and administration of decision making processes has advantages and disadvantages for all actors concerned. Discretion at low level of the decision making hierarchy can undermine democratic accountability. Conversely, discretion can also allow constructive flexibility. Discretion in decision making is therefore significant, as it provides various actors, and their 'value sets', to enter the design and administration of planning procedures.

Given the Christchurch City Council's apparent bias towards the tower, the points at which they exercise discretion about the design of processes within which the public can participate are important. Specific questions relate to the design of public participation processes. Flexible public participation processes are commendable in the sense that procedures can then be shaped to suit the individual case. However, such flexibility depends on a neutral administering body responsible for choosing the most 'suitable' process. Despite apparent bias towards the tower, the Christchurch City Council appears to have been relatively diligent in the neutral administration of the 'formal' planning process. However, the Council's performance in the administration of informal processes appears to have been less diligent.
6.9 DECISION MAKING CRITERIA

Economic returns were a major selling point of the tower proposal. Discussion in 6.5 revealed doubt and confusion among participants over some of the benefits the tower was estimated to bring to Christchurch area. Further to this issue however, is the acceptance of economic returns as acceptable criteria by which to gauge the acceptability of the project.

The CCC Deputy City Planner believed it vital that the inner city had development (Lawn, 1988a). However, some respondents questioned whether these benefits would eventuate in the first place, and finally, to whom they would accrue. They also expressed frustration at apparent decision maker preoccupation with economic criteria as opposed to other decision criteria such as the preservation of open space, which in turn yields non-market returns. Furthermore they found it difficult to counter the argument based on economic criteria without resorting to emotive language which they felt was instantly disregarded by decision makers as having no credibility.

Distribution of Benefits

The substance of the CUC evidence presented at the Commissioners' hearing dealt with the issue of capital gain were the tower to be sold. In their opinion, the developer could reap considerable capital gain from the sale of the project, which the public would miss out on despite it having been built on public land (CUC, 1988).

Perceptions of Reality

One respondent provided further comment on the possible bias towards economic criteria, commenting that decision makers tended to appeal to developers' perceptions of what
was good for the city. However, he felt these perceptions represented a selective reading of the facts, as developers' main concerns generally related to profit making through the construction of high rise buildings for lease or sale for capital gain.

**Conflict of Planning and Commercial Functions**

The case study also reveals that the mix of planning and commercially oriented functions within the local authority responsible for Victoria Square, namely the Christchurch City Council, impinged on the criteria used by the Council in assessing the proposal. This conflict of interest potentially jeopardises the likelihood of any independent oversight of the process.

**Comments**

The redevelopment of Victoria Square necessitated a number of decisions by the City Council. The criteria guiding these decisions necessarily influenced the outcome of these decisions. The case study reveals a bias towards justifying decisions on the bias of economic criteria. The Christchurch City Council's administration of planning functions is seen to conflict with its commercial activities. Furthermore, the City Council also undertook non-decision making in referring the planning decision to a panel of independent commissioners.

**6.10 EXAMINATION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION PROBLEMS**

An important issue is the degree of collective action undertaken by groups of individuals presumably bound by similar objectives. However, such groups often encounter
problems in organising and maintaining themselves and achieving their objectives (Olson, 1965).

Free Riders

The literature concerned with collective action refers to the phenomena of 'free-riders', where people benefit from (group) actions even though they contribute little or nothing to the achievement of group goals (Olson, 1965). Two respondents involved with interest groups commented that the fact that other people may benefit from their work, and their investment of time and effort, did not worry them as they thought their own values to be generally coincident with the public interest. One respondent did remark that although their group had substantial popular support throughout the 'tower issue', not many of their supporters were prepared to become actively involved in the organisation. The success of the group therefore depended on a hard core of people to do all the work.

Economies of Scale in Group Participation

Some respondents felt participation as a group achieved more than would have been achieved if members had acted individually.

For example, two Protect Victoria Square Committee members commented that as a group they received a lot of support and achieved things that they wouldn't have done as individuals. Prior to the tower proposal they had not previously been involved in a political/community action type of issue. When first involved in it they felt like 'real amateurs' and their inexperience really showed, especially in organising publicity stunts and trying to match the arguments put forward by proponents of the tower.
These experiences suggest an economies of scale in group participation, and is a concept already referred to by Olson (1965), who goes further to discuss the influence of group size on the degree of group organisation:

"Though the more members in the group the greater the total costs of organisation, the costs of organization per person need not rise, for there are surely economies of scale in organization". (Olson, 1965:46)

The total costs of organisation for groups such as the professional institutes, Christchurch Civic Trust, Historic Places Trust and the Canterbury Landscape Group are likely to have been less compared to the newer Protect Victoria Square Committee. The more established groups were better equipped in terms of information, representation and delegation networks, which in turn are likely to have improved their chances of success. Such groups also appeared to have had more experience of planning issues and the relevant skills required for effective participation.

Comments relating to the time and effort required to participate suggest that the Protect Victoria Square Committee may have been advantaged as group members were less tired of participating in planning processes and therefore possibly more motivated to participate. For example, a common issue for respondents involved with interest groups was the problem encountered in sustaining enthusiasm throughout the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and in particular the tower issue. The Historic Places Trust representative confessed to 'overdosing' on the tower issue (Lockhead, 1988). He said it was hard to maintain enthusiasm for the issue over the three year period of involvement.
Anonymity Through Collective Action

Comments from a representative of the Canterbury Landscape Group revealed that for some individuals the operation of groups provided a veil with which to disguise their opposition to the tower. This desire for anonymity appears to stem from a fear of possible retribution by the Christchurch establishment of business and decision making interests, by way of boycotting participants' businesses, etc. Such allegations pose serious questions on the openness of the processes affecting the inner city environment, and in particular the application of overt pressure preventing, or at least discouraging, groups and individuals from participating. Furthermore, the fact that some people feared participating in the tower issue, because of possible retribution, is an indication of some of the issues at stake and the degree to which certain sectors of the community may have stood to gain from the construction of the tower.

Accountability Structures Within A Group

The Christchurch Civic Trust representative commented that the voluntary nature of interest groups made the introduction of accountability structures into the organisation extremely difficult (Findlay, 1988). Groups therefore had to rely on trust and assume that people would represent group interests at meetings, etc.

Resources Necessary for (Collective) Action

A common issue amongst respondents was the costs required to participate. In this sense they were referring to even small costs; for example, people wishing to participate in the Commissioners' hearing were required to bring eight copies of their evidence.
There was a widespread belief among interest groups that
the developer had received cash and media advantages. In
particular there was resentment about the $36000 Regional
Development Grant received by the developer. This
resentment was fuelled when the Christchurch City Council
rejected the Protect Victoria Square Committee's
application for a $1500 planning grant.

The CCC Officials said Planning Grant Money had been
allocated once before in the known history of the Council.
They felt it inappropriate for a local authority to fund
groups opposed to City Council policy. They also
anticipated problems in identifying the groups eligible for
such funding: 'once you start funding community groups,
where do you stop?' (Lawn, 1988a).

**Comments**

The discussion above reveals that for some people,
collective action presents an avenue by which they may
participate, where otherwise they would not. However,
individuals are shown to encounter some problems in
participating in groups.

A number of these problems are the result of factors
external to groups, such as the availability of resources.
The case study reveals possible disparities in the allocation
of resources across different sectors of the community.

Other factors, such as problems with free riders and
accountability structures, are internal to group
organisations, and influence group success.
The case study indicates a demand for public participation in the inner city urban environment. For example, a member of the Protect Victoria Square Committee commented that they would like to see more of the urban environment in the hands of the citizenry. Another participant objected to some of the decisions made by the 'city fathers', who although sometimes right, usually made their decisions on the basis of technical information only, without consulting with the community. However, not all groups and individuals felt motivated or suitably equipped to participate. These issues are discussed below.

Public Participation: Interpretations of The Concept

The case study identified a number of interpretations of the concept of public participation. These varying interpretations relate to the earlier discussion in Chapter Three, of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. Some participants believed public participation to be a means of involving a representative range of community interests in the general decision making processes affecting their environment, while others saw public participation as asking the public which of a number of predetermined options they preferred.

Barriers to Participation

In the course of the case study a member of the Protect Victoria Square Committee succinctly summarised three types of people in relation to the likelihood of their getting involved in planning issues: those who don't care; those who do care but don't know what to do; and a few who both care and know what to do. The same respondent remarked further that those motivated to
participate were often held back by the number of issues in which they could potentially be involved. This summary indicates a number of barriers to participation, where people don't have the motivation, knowledge of the processes involved, or the resources, to participate. These issues are addressed below. Discussion is extended to consider the influence of process design on public participation.

Public Apathy

The majority of respondents believed that unless people have a vested interest in a planning issue, they tend to be fairly apathetic. Some saw public apathy in terms of urban issues. One respondent believed people were poorly motivated to become involved in inner city issues, and that this poor sense of motivation may stem from a sense of powerlessness (Lawn, 1988a).

In addressing the motivation of people to become involved in urban planning issues, the Canterbury Landscape Group representative concluded that it was harder to motivate people over issues concerning inner city open space. People were generally more motivated to become involved in issues where more emotion was attached, such as those affecting their own neighbourhood (Moore, 1988).

The ICON representative commented that the inner city does not have a recognisable constituency. Furthermore, there was no neighbourhood organisation with any power over the inner city (Hollobon, 1988).

Representatives of the Protect Victoria Square Committee believed that people were reluctant to become involved in the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and the tower issue, as they felt removed from urban processes, feeling they had no claim to urban resources.
Poor Public Knowledge of the Planning Process

Respondents remarked on the poor public knowledge of the general planning processes. For example, before people can participate they need to be familiar with district schemes and how to write submissions. It was suggested by several respondents that this problem could be overcome by giving a higher public profile to public participation procedures, through such mechanisms as public notification. They conceded this would not be of much value in cases where planning consents were not notifiable.

The Christchurch City Councillor interviewed agreed that people didn't know how to use existing participatory structures. She felt it her role to help overcome this problem, and did so by providing community and neighbourhood groups with copies of the district scheme and other related planning material.

The Design of Participatory Processes

Length of Process

The Christchurch Civic Trust representative commented that public participation processes currently in use are time consuming and inappropriate given the speed of current lifestyles (Findlay, 1988). Such a point may be the basis for promoting the use of other public participation processes such as free-phones.

Other respondents commented that the actual process governing the tower proceedings was so long and drawn out, that many people thought the issue was over, and contributed to the public apathy, discussed above.
Early Involvement

The NZ Institute of Architects representative felt it important to involve people early on in the planning process. Consent agencies could therefore more readily gauge their preferences (Sheppard, 1988). Public involvement left till later increased the chances of planning type issues developing into a battle between adversaries.

Sr Planner of the CUC said the scheme review process was important for getting early involvement in planning processes, as urban management decisions often referred back to what the scheme allowed.

The representative for the Christchurch Civic Trust believed the City Council should have called for submissions when the tower was first proposed, as people are daunted by the planning process and more likely to write submissions. A submission process would also have been less costly to the City Council, developer and public interest groups. It would also have allowed for the continued involvement of the Advisory Group.

A member of the Protect Victoria Square Committee was dissatisfied with the extent to which the Christchurch City Council consulted its ratepayers, believing the council should have sent 'feelers' into the community before deciding on any action over the tower proposal.

Role of Elected Officials

In theory local body politicians represent the public interest in decisions affecting the city management. Case study results indicate a growing cynicism about the local body election process. Respondents also expressed concern at the impending amalgamation of local bodies in Christchurch, believing it would result in an even more
anonymous bureaucracy which would consult less with its ratepayers.

Comment

This section has addressed the issue of participatory processes in the redevelopment of Victoria Square, including respondent suggestions on how participatory processes might be improved.

The case study reveals a number of barriers to participation, particularly in terms of public apathy and a poor knowledge of the processes shaping the (urban) environment. The influence of resources on participation have already been discussed in section 6.9.

Case study results indicate a preference for early involvement of community interests in decision making. The experiences of Victoria Square, and more particularly the tower issue, illustrate the degree to which the issue can become politically loaded in the absence of full information and few opportunities for participation.

The argument for early involvement was also extended by some commentators who recommended that community interests become involved at the goal forming stages of planning processes, such as the review of district planning schemes (Lawn, 1988a; Versteegh, 1988). However, 'chance' developments such as a tower for Victoria Square cannot be predicted, even at the goal forming stage. Members of the public cannot be blamed for objecting to a proposal for an 187m tower in an area which in the 1986 district scheme review described as being:

"...of high amenity value and open space provided for both the enjoyment of the public and the protection of the natural environment. The use of land in this zone for organised sports or the erection of large
buildings is not permitted...". (Christchurch City Council, 1986:110)

The call for involvement at the goal forming stage therefore highlights one major flaw of the planning process, in that many developments can not be predicted. This finding serves as an argument for designing 'flexible' participatory processes to cope with extraordinary developments, such as a tower proposal for Victoria Square.

The case study therefore identifies the need for a scoping phase to be undertaken by the planning authority in assessing the likely range of effect of a development proposal, such as the tower proposed for Victoria Square. This finding is consistent with the general approach espoused by advocates of social impact assessment techniques.

6.12 CASE STUDY CONCLUSIONS

The following discussion concludes the case study with a summary of the major issues. This discussion acts as a background to Chapter Seven, which focuses on the general issue of public participation, and more specifically, public participation in the urban environment.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the previous discussion of the case study results. The presentation of these conclusions is aimed at identifying areas for possible reform and future administration of public participation processes.

Future Use of Consultative Processes

Experiences of the consultative Advisory Group clearly signify the need for a well considered structure, definition
of role, lines of communication, and organisation of meetings, in the use of similar consultative procedures.

Institutional Power

The Christchurch City Council exuded an image of power to the majority of participants interviewed. This discussion does not intend addressing whether this image was deserved or not. However, it is apparent that actors within institutions need to be made aware of the impression of power they convey, albeit unintentionally. A local authority should therefore contemplate measures by which it might overcome these negative impressions.

The Council official is also vested with considerable power in advising decision makers. However, the nature of urban resource management is such that decision makers cannot be a party to all information concerning an issue. The channels of communication within the organisation should therefore be clearly specified and officers held accountable for their actions.

Information

Information is the essence of communication. The access and quality of information was a major factor influencing participation in the redevelopment of Victoria Square.

Poor communication channels created negative images for participants. Conflicting information confused the issue which in turn impinged on public participation. Case study results therefore point to the need for well publicised and accurate information.
The Role of Experts

The role of the consultant necessarily arises in a discussion of information. Some participants suspected the impartiality of the information supplied by consultants to the developer. Such suspicions emphasise the need for critical assessment of information provided by all parties. In the redevelopment of Victoria Square, 'independent' assessments were undertaken by interest groups, but often accused of being partisan. This finding highlights the need for local bodies, such as the Christchurch City Council, to critically assess proposals from an 'impartial' stance.

Conflicts of Interest

The case study indicates an uncomfortable mix of planning and commercial functions within the Christchurch City Council. The structure of local and regional government is currently under review. The case study indicates that the implications of such a conflict of functions should be addressed in the review.

Barriers to Participation: Can they be overcome?

The case study has highlighted a number of barriers to participation (e.g. the knowledge and skills required to participate) which, in some instances can be avoided. Constraints less readily overcome include the finances and resources necessary for participation.

The earlier discussion of participation techniques, including free phones, consultative processes and submissions potentially address some of these problems, and should be encouraged by local authorities contemplating public participation exercises.
Early involvement may decrease the need to expend large amounts of resources later. This need was demonstrated in the tower issue where the debate deteriorated to an argument between tower advocates and established interest groups. The Christchurch City Council was caught uncomfortably in the middle. The problem was made worse by the length of the processes involved. Much of the conflict may have been avoided had the Council embarked on public consultation earlier. The Christchurch City Council's brief to the Advisory Group, to consider the tower, can hardly be construed as public consultation.

Public Access to Decision Processes

Case study results also indicate that a major constraint to public participation in the redevelopment of Victoria Square was the attitude of the Christchurch City Council and the manifestation of bias by the individual actor within the local authority. The experiences of participants in the events surrounding the redevelopment of Victoria Square therefore appear to have been influenced by a range of factors within the 'decision making system'.

The case study indicates that, overall, public participation may be a limiting concept. A wider perspective addressing the institutional arrangements and actors involved may therefore be more appropriate to address the real issues affecting public participation.

Public Participation: The Stigma

The case study also indicates that people will generally not get involved in an issue unless they are really concerned. Factors identified as constraints to public participation include time and resources. This finding counters the often publicised attitude that the scope of third party effects is given too wide a definition in the Town and

6.13 REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE CASE STUDY

Before generalising the events surrounding the redevelopment of Victoria Square to the issue of public participation in the urban environment, it is appropriate to first discuss whether the case study is typical of urban resource management issues.

The redevelopment of Victoria Square and in particular the tower proposal attracted widespread public attention and in this sense may have been atypical of many inner city developments. Reasons for the high profile include:
- the tower was markedly different from surrounding proposals;
- the tower was planned for open public space within the inner city;
- the Christchurch City Council's handling of the tower issue and in particular their treatment of the Advisory Group;
- Christchurch has a number of relatively well organised 'urban' watchdog groups in Christchurch, many of whom were involved in the original Victoria Square Advisory Group.

Victoria Square was zoned Recreation 1 when the tower was first proposed, and therefore did not allow the construction of a tower. The tower proposed for Victoria Square was therefore not allowed as of right and the proposal had to go through a planning hearing. The proposal therefore attracted more attention than it would have, had it been destined for private land within the inner city business district where it could have been built as of right.
The tower proposal was also atypical in the sense that because it was to be sited on public land, the scope of those deemed to be affected by the proposal was considerably widened. This scope would have been narrowed had the proposal been planned for private land.

The tower issue also raised issues relating to the lack of an inner city constituency. Although the case study reveals a generally weak urban constituency, the redevelopment of Victoria Square was atypical because of Christchurch's (urban) interest groups, notably those interests represented on the Advisory Group. The City's 'garden city' image may contribute to this constituency of interest. Furthermore, Christchurch is not the subject of the equivalent development pressure faced by other New Zealand cities, including Auckland and Wellington. Community interests may therefore feel less daunted to participate.

The problem of urban constituency is reinforced and exacerbated by existing institutions governing the management of the inner city environment. For example, the scope of those deemed to be affected by planning applications within the urban environment is such that members of the public are potentially excluded unless affected by the proposal, or represent some aspect of the public interest. In this sense, the tower issue was atypical of many urban developments.
PART THREE
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT
CHAPTER SEVEN
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter addresses the original project objectives, that is, "...to investigate the concept of public participation, and in particular explore whether the urban environment poses any additional problems for public participation...".

Chapters 4-6 have already presented the results of the case study. A number of common issues emerged through the course of the case study. These issues raise questions relating to the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and the general question of public participation in the urban environment.

The following discussion is also aimed at addressing the issues raised by Dunleavy (1981) in determining those processes which make public participation in the inner city urban environment different from other resource management contexts.

7.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following discussion is aimed at drawing a number of conclusions on public participation as a concept following the experiences of the case study and the theoretical perspectives presented in Chapter Three. This approach therefore follows the framework discussed in Chapter One (Fig 1.1).

Issues covered include the: value of the concept; level of public knowledge of decision processes; the resources required to participate; length of processes; design of participation processes; and decision making criteria.
The Concept of Public Participation

The case study concluded that public participation itself may be a limited concept. In understanding the concept public participation, and investigating means of implementing alternative participation processes, it may be more appropriate to extend the scope of research to include an institutional perspective. Such a perspective would include a focus on the actors involved and relevant decision making processes, and not just the participating public and the factors influencing their success.

Nevertheless, public participation provides an ideal starting point in beginning to understand the decision making processes governing the allocation of resources within any system. Furthermore, although public participation may be a relatively vague term, it provides a useful benchmark with which to monitor the efficacy of various institutional arrangements and organisations.

Public Knowledge of Decision Processes

The case study has revealed a generally poor public knowledge of the processes governing resource management decision making, and more specifically a poor public knowledge of the opportunities for public participation. Given the existing institutional setting for public participation, there are few mechanisms by which the public might be encouraged to participate. Scope exists for local authority councillors to liaise with and 'empower' their constituency. However, it would seem there are few councillors committed to such involvement. The majority of people are unaware of their rights to participate, and remain so, unless compelled to participate due to events such as the tower proposal in Victoria Square.
Length of Planning Procedures

Over the years, some development interests have expressed dismay at the length of planning procedures, and in particular the way 'viable' developments are often held up, and sometimes cancelled, due to the activities of a small group of extremist objectors. The case study demonstrated that so-called 'extremist objectors' also find the process lengthy. Furthermore, given participant comments concerning the time and energy required to participate in the planning process, it might be concluded that the public will not participate unless they have a 'legitimate' objection to the proposal under consideration. The extremist label is therefore largely inaccurate and condemning of those groups and individuals concerned at the management of the environment.

Resources Required to Participate

The case study indicates that not all people have the skills, resources, or time required to become involved in planning processes. The people who do participate are therefore often unrepresentative of the general populous. This issue is an important consideration in the design of public participation processes, and may be an argument for promoting techniques which encourage widespread participation, such as free-phones, public meetings, submission processes, and well informed media coverage.

Categories of Public Participation Processes

The following discussion focuses on a number of issues relating to public participation processes. Initial discussion addresses the distinction between formal and informal processes. Ensuing material investigates the consultative
processes, local body representation and the district planning process.

Formal and Informal Participation
The case study has drawn attention to the distinction between formal and informal public participation. This distinction was significant in the redevelopment of Victoria Square where the Commissioners' decision was influenced largely by the evidence presented in the course of the formal hearing process. However, participation of individuals and groups may have been stimulated by participation through informal processes, such as petitions, writing letters to the editor, and radio talkbacks.

Furthermore, in accepting the recommendations of the Commissioners, and withdrawing Scheme Change No. 17 that would have permitted a tower in Victoria Square, the Christchurch City Council is likely to have considered public perception of the proposal expressed through both 'formal' and 'informal' processes. In making their decision, it is likely that the Christchurch City Council also considered their prospects of re-election at the next local body elections.

The distinction between formal and informal processes was also significant for participants in the Victoria Square Advisory Group, who found that without the support of the Christchurch City Council, their resultant 'formally approved' design plan actually carried no weight. Although the plan had been 'formally approved', the Council was not obliged to bide by its earlier decision. The fact the plan was guaranteed by Council was obviously not enough. The effect of the Council's decision has been to lower general public faith in the future use of similar informal consultative procedures.

The case study further indicated that some groups and individuals are unaware of or daunted by the prospect of
participating in the 'formal' planning process. They prefer to participate 'informally', including such activities as writing letters to newspapers, signing petitions, and participating in radio talkbacks.

Consultative Processes
The experiences of the Advisory Group in the redevelopment of Victoria Square raised questions about the aim and role of such groups. Similar experiences of consultative processes elsewhere can be related to Fainstein's discussion of planning for the redevelopment of New York's Times Square:

"...The final resolution also established a citizen advisory committee on design issues; whether it will succeed in seriously influencing the final outcome depends wholly on the willingness of the planners and developers to respond to it...". (Fainstein, 1987:238)

The experiences of Victoria Square showed that if decision makers decide they do not like the product of a public participation process, and disregard the product for some 'better' option, they risk damaging their public image and commitment to public participation.

The case study has already raised issues concerning the use of consultative processes, such as the Advisory Group, identifying the need for a clearly defined role, lines of communication, and group organisation.

The use of consultative groups also presents questions concerning the choice of group members, and in particular the representativeness of the various groups involved. Eventual choice of consultative group members will also depend on whether the group's role is to represent the 'public interest' or be a means of obtaining widespread professional advice.
Local Body Representation
The case study identified considerable dissatisfaction with local body representation. There was scepticism expressed at the representativeness and calibre of local body councillors, and a lack of confidence in the changes likely to emerge from the impending local body reforms and amalgamation. The case study results also indicated that the general public usually have insufficient time, resources, and often confidence, to participate in planning processes, let alone get involved in local body politics.

The District Planning Process
The case study identified public apathy and a tendency to avoid involvement in the planning process at the 'goal forming stage', such as the district scheme review. Furthermore, developments such as the tower proposed for Victoria Square were not specified in the goals for the area, namely through the district planning scheme. Scope for public participation must therefore be provided at a later stage.

Decision Making Criteria
The decision making criteria used by officials are an important part of the context for public participation. The criteria governing such decisions made can be seen in context with reference to work by Fainstein (1987). In her discussion of the 'politics of criteria' and its application to the redevelopment of Times Square, New York, Fainstein challenges the 'conventional wisdom' that growth is good no matter what the cost, and asks whether it is feasible to create growth with equity. In trying to answer this question she concludes:
"...the choice of benefit criterion in urban development, if it is to change, must be political in both senses. It will necessarily determine who gets what; but in addition it will be the object of open contest rather than a paternalistic assumption by policymakers that economic development necessarily reflects the public interest." (Fainstein, 1987:246)

Fainstein's comments are applicable to the case study and urban development in general, where the revenue benefits of the proposals are assumed and promoted by both developer and local authority as the major reason for accepting the proposal.

The actual choice of benefit criteria may not be a conscious process. For example, Fainstein argues that the decision rules adhered to by public bodies, such as the Christchurch City Council, are generated by:

"...the interplay of the narrow interests of the politicians and developers, the legislative mandates given to administrative and planning agencies, the mobilization of citizen groups, and the broader ideological framework within which the planning system operates." (Fainstein, 1988:244)

The criteria guiding the decisions of a local authority are therefore a reflection of a number of complex processes.

Conclusions to the Discussion of Public Participation

A major conclusion of the study is the need for real public participation, and not just token efforts. Otherwise the administering authority runs the risk of seriously affecting its credibility, and the participating public are deterred from co-operating, or participating altogether, in future processes.

There is a demand for public participation, and the advantages outlined in Chapter Three are reinforced. Furthermore, considering that public bodies, such as the
Christchurch City Council, are administering resources on behalf of their constituents, it seems right that the public be a party to these decisions. Urban development conveys the impression of a 'closed shop' as far as public input is concerned. The challenge of public participation would increase the openness of these processes.

Alternative public participation procedures are more likely to be successful in meeting the specific needs of the community and the particular case under discussion. This was demonstrated through the Advisory Group process used in the redevelopment of Victoria Square.

However, the case study showed that the eventual success of such processes is often at the discretion of the local authority, and in particular, the administering officials. Furthermore, such flexible processes are difficult to specify in statute form. Local authorities are under no obligation to involve the public more than is specified in the Town and Country Planning Act 1977.

Directions for implementing flexible public participation processes are discussed by Forester (1980), who addresses alternatives to the politically potent and distorted communication by planners. For example, he suggests that planners:

"...cultivate community networks of liaisons and contacts, rather than depending on the power of documents, both to provide and disseminate information; ...educate citizens and community organizations about the planning process; ... develop skills to work with groups and conflict situations, rather than expecting progress to stem mainly from isolated technical work;...". (Forester, 1980:282)

The solutions identified by Forester complement issues raised by the case study. The lack of time and commitment of local body councillors to such measures
suggests that local bodies require staff to facilitate community liaison.

### 7.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Section 7.2 has addressed the major issues concerning public participation to emerge both from the case study, and the background to the concept established in Chapter Three. In conclusion to this study, it is now appropriate to address the issue of public participation in the urban environment, and in particular consider those processes that make the urban environment distinctive.

**Institutional Context of Urban Development: An Introduction**

The case study illustrated the institutional context of urban development, and in particular the high development pressure within the inner city. Such development is often justified on the grounds that it is good for the city. However, some participants active in the redevelopment of Victoria Square disputed whether city residents are a party to the benefits of such development. Furthermore, they questioned whether it is possible to undertake architecturally sound development.

Critics of the processes governing the redevelopment of Victoria Square were labelled selfish non-progressives. The case study revealed that although people may oppose such developments intuitively, they do not feel empowered to develop alternatives as they are unsure whether it is possible to undertake urban development without compromising the profit margins of developers.
The case study also raised serious questions about the openness of the processes governing the urban environment. Significant amounts of capital are involved in urban development processes. It is therefore not surprising that pressure is subtly applied to deter opposition.

**Inner City Constituency**

The case study revealed that the inner city typically lacks a constituency of concerned interests.

Apart from a relatively small proportion of public land, the majority of inner city urban land is owned by private interests. The entrepreneurs introduced in Chapter Two, and visible in the case study, play a major role in stimulating urban development. Renowned for their 'commercial orientation', these private interests are generally concerned with the income yielded from the urban environment. The general public therefore have little claim to the inner city environment through the ownership of property, even though many members of the public may spend significant proportions of their working week residing in that environment.

The case study also shows that the concern for development is a major concern for local authorities such as the Christchurch City Council. Management input arguing for a decreasing emphasis on development within the inner city has generally been unwelcome. The case study revealed that some members of the public suspect 'Council Capture' by development interests, at the expense of other considerations.

The issue of urban constituency is reinforced by the institutional arrangements and organisations governing the management of the inner city environment. This issue is discussed below in the context of those deemed to be
affected, as specified in the Town and Country Planning Act 1977.

**Those Deemed To be Affected by Urban Developments**

The problem of inner city constituency is exacerbated by other factors within the decision making realm. The case study revealed problems for public participation, particularly in terms of standing in the planning process. Chapter Four discussed the institutions affecting the decision making context of the redevelopment of Victoria Square, and explained the planning 'definition' of those members of the public who are deemed to be affected by proposals:

"2(3) The following persons shall have the right to object
(a) The Minister
(b) Any united or regional council, Regional Planning Authority, Council... or local authority having jurisdiction in or adjacent to the area to which the district scheme or application applies.
(c) Any body or person affected.
(d) Any body or person representing some relevant aspect of the public interest." (Town and Country Planning Act, 1977)

At the local body level it appears that the strict planning definition of those deemed to be affected, be it vague, is often relaxed to allow more people to participate. However, a stricter definition tends to be reinforced if the case appears before the Planning Tribunal, a point emphasised by the two planners interviewed in the course of the case study. Therefore, had the tower proposal gone to the Planning Tribunal, the standing of many of the people who presented evidence at the hearing is likely to have been challenged.

The issue discussed above also alludes to the importance of interest group involvement. Interest groups arguing that
they represent 'some relevant aspect' of the public interest, are generally more likely to have standing in front of the Planning Tribunal than individuals. This claim is made on the basis of accounts of past experiences in public participation processes during the case study.

Urban Collective Action

The case study highlighted a number of issues for collective action of groups participating in the redevelopment of Victoria Square. Groups purporting to represent some aspect of the public interest can be successful. From the case study it appears that the problems encountered by groups, such as a lack of resources and the time required to participate, are common to all members of the public, whether they be participating in a group or individually.

However, collective action theory points to problems encountered in the actual formation of groups. In his discussion of the logic of collective action, Olson (1965) comments on the influence of the distribution of costs and benefits on the actual motivations of people to become involved.

Olson argues that where benefits of a proposal are concentrated on a relatively small sector of society, individuals within that sector are theoretically motivated to become involved in the attainment of those benefits. This contrasts the situation where benefits are dispersed and thinly spread, in which case peoples' motivations to work towards obtaining those benefits, is significantly less.

Likewise, the theory can be applied to predict human behaviour according to the distribution of costs. Where individuals are the subject of dispersed costs, then there is generally less incentive for them to become involved and
organise to avoid these costs, than in the case where costs are concentrated.

Olson's theory does have its limitations in the sense that little account is taken of the 'altruist', who while not receiving any direct benefit herself is still motivated to accrue benefits for the rest of society, future generations and non-human components of the environment. Exceptions such as this yield phenomena such as current day environmental groups.

However, Olson's theory can be used to explore the relationships and motivations of individuals in terms of issues such as public participation in the urban environment. The inner city environment implicates a relatively large non-resident population, many of whom are more concerned with the maintenance of their residential quality than the inner city environment. There are few incentives for these people to become involved in influencing the shape of the inner city core. It is therefore not surprising that public interest groups seeking to influence the events in the inner city environment experience problems in recruiting members.

Furthermore, the concentration of benefits from inner city development are such that development interests, and on some occasions local authority interests, are relatively well motivated to promote development in the area. Benefits accrue to developers from the income generated by the sale or lease of properties. Benefits also accrue to the local authority through rating revenue.

In conclusion, the problems of urban collective action appear not to have been significant for the groups active in the case study. These groups were largely arguing for the same thing, and were therefore not in direct competition with each other. Furthermore, the nature of the good they seek has a number of 'qualities' which affect
group activities. Urban design quality is a non-exclusive public good. Typical of most public goods, it is generally under-supplied. Furthermore, the nature of the good is such that consumption by one individual does not preclude use by others.

The Urban Design Approach

The case study raised further questions concerning the 'new' urban design approach to inner city management. The urban design approach is aimed at developing design controls which influence the appearance of buildings and subsequently humanize the inner city. To date, there has been little control placed on the design and appearance of inner city buildings. This absence is despite widespread public comment on the appearance and impact of those buildings on the inner city environment.

The concept of urban design was introduced in Chapter Two. Important issues to emerge from this discussion related to the urban design approach to management, and in particular the cursory glance given to public participation by urban design specialists. Discussion concluded that although the urban design approach may yield a considerably 'better' result than previous approaches, it was still a continuation of the technocratic /we know best attitude of urban resource managers, restricting urban design activities to the professional engineers, local government managers, and elected members.

Chapter Two investigated the more theoretical side of urban design, and concluded that the interpretation of the quality of the urban environment is largely dependent on individual values. Implementation of urban design therefore faced a major obstacle in determining exactly what is a good urban design product.
This point was reinforced by the case study, where background research and participant interviews revealed frequent conflicts on what constitutes a good urban design product. However, the case study indicated that the process through which the urban design product is achieved, has a major influence on the final perception of that product.

For example, although the design produced by the Victoria Square Advisory Group was not thought to be perfect, it gained considerable public acceptance for the way in which it was achieved. Public participation processes, such as the consultative approach of the Advisory Group, may therefore provide solutions to the urban design problem.

Interestingly, the Christchurch City Council has embarked on its own urban design strategy (CCC, 1988c). This interest follows the tower issue and has been prompted by the voluntarily based Christchurch Urban Design Group, whose membership includes interests similar to those represented on the previous Victoria Square Advisory Group. The Christchurch Urban Design Group is therefore an amalgam of professional, business and community interests.

A plan governing Christchurch's inner city urban design has yet to be implemented. Council planning officials are to be equipped with greater discretionary powers in deciding whether a proposal conforms to certain urban design guidelines (Lawn, 1988b). These powers have been conferred by the recent amendment to the Town and Country Planning Act 1977, allowing controlled uses. Beyond establishing the urban design guidelines, there will be no provision for public participation in cases where developments are allowed as of right. These developments will however be the subject of scrutiny by Council planning officers.
Considering the almost identical memberships of the Christchurch Urban Design Group, and the Victoria Square Advisory Group, it could be inferred that the interest groups concerned with the management of the inner city are attempting to change the overall decision making structure which ultimately affects the design of urban areas, rather than conform to the existing site by site, piecemeal approach.

Fainstein (1987) also comments on the piecemeal means of public participation, as opposed to participation aimed at changing the overall decision making processes:

"...the 'mobilization of bias - that is the tendency to accept certain frameworks of analysis or benefit criteria as givens - means that conflict may remain latent or may manifest itself over subsidiary issues rather than over the determining institutional mechanisms...opposition to individual projects alone will never change the structure that causes planning agencies continually to favour growth." (Fainstein, 1987:245)

Conclusion

The above discussion has drawn on case study results and the material introduced in the Chapters Two and Three, and summarised the major issues into the broad category of the institutional context of urban development. Issues such as: inner city constituency; those deemed to be affected by urban developments; urban collective action; and the urban design approach, fall within this category. These issues identify areas where changes in the existing pattern of public participation in the urban environment are likely to occur.
7.4 AN APPROACH TO
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The aim of this study was to investigate public participation in the urban environment. The urban environment has been found to pose significant problems for participation. These problems are over and above the problems outlined in 7.2, and include urban collective action, the lack of a clear urban constituency, and other issues within the context of urban development.

Although it has not been the purpose of this study to present the solution to the problems outlined above, it is of course appropriate to canvass options for overcoming them. The following discussion therefore addresses questions which should be considered in devising an approach for public participation in future urban development.

The suggested approach to public participation in urban redevelopment is divided into two phases. The first phase addresses ongoing steps for overcoming the problems encountered by the public seeking to participate in the urban environment. The second phase is applicable to specific cases of urban development.

Urban Resource Management: An Ongoing Approach

Empowering the Urban Constituency.
A poor knowledge of urban decision processes among members of the public prohibits active participation. There is a role for community liaison between local authorities and community interests, explaining the urban resource management systems, and opportunities for public participation. Appropriate areas to cover include the Town and Country Planning Act 1977, the local district planning scheme, and a guide to council staff and activities.
Transparent Processes
Some community interests suspect collusion between development and local authority interests. If the benefits from urban development are real, then there should be no reason for such secrecy. Open decision making would decrease the suspicion currently surrounding urban decision processes.

Supportive Planning Agency
For any of the measures outlined above to be successful, there must first be a supportive local authority prepared to take a proactive approach in encouraging and facilitating public participation. The case study identified opportunities for community liaison, and these have been developed above.

Urban Development: An Approach for a Specific Case

Early Involvement
Some community interests resent being told to wait for the formal planning process before they can have any input. Meanwhile, the planning agency and the developer are often undertaking private negotiations. If the formal processes cannot be brought forward, then earlier informal processes, such as public meetings, free phones and requests for submissions, should be considered.

Consultative Processes
Consultative processes are appropriate to issues of urban design. However such processes must employ well defined goals and objectives, organisation and lines of communication. Furthermore, the authority responsible for co-ordinating such processes must guarantee that the outcome of the process will be acknowledged and acted upon.
Funding
Decision makers should recognise the significant positive contributions community interests can make in terms of improving the quality of the urban environment. This contribution should be recognised and funding made available accordingly.

7.5 CONCLUSIONS

This study has been based on the assumption that all individuals are entitled to be made a party to the decisions affecting the expenditure of their financial resources by organisations purporting to represent their interests, including local, regional and central government.

This assumption was applied to a case study of the allocation and decision making powers of the Christchurch City Council in relation to the redevelopment of Victoria Square. An integral question throughout the case study was the degree to which the public were involved in the decision making processes affecting the inner city urban environment.

The case study reinforced a number of the issues raised in the literature on the urban environment, and revealed some important features of the urban environment. The Christchurch City Council were found to have responsibly handled its duty to administer formal decision making processes, as specified in the Town and Country Planning Act 1977. However, informal processes, such as the operation of the Victoria Square Advisory Group, were affected by the Council's bias towards the tower.

Nevertheless, informal processes of public participation are advantageous. Informal processes can be designed to suit the case under the study. Formal participation procedures are inflexible and cannot be adjusted to suit the individual
case. Furthermore, community interests are daunted by formal processes, and are subsequently more inclined to participate informally. However, the case study revealed that the 'successful' use of informal processes, requires the support of the relevant planning agency. This support was not forthcoming from the Christchurch City Council.

Discussion in 7.1 addressed the meaning of public participation, public participation processes, the local body election process, collective action, the planning process, the discretion exercised by local body decision makers and the decision making criteria applied. These issues related to the theoretical material presented in the earlier sections of the study.

When the case study was generalised to the general issue of public participation in the urban environment, a number of interesting insights into the issue were revealed. Participants in the redevelopment of Victoria Square were dissatisfied with the way the urban environment is managed and the opportunities for public participation in urban resource management. People felt constrained in participating in urban decision making processes.

Discussion in Section 7.2 focused on the institutional context of urban development and its implications for public participation. Discussion was extended to consider an approach to public participation in future cases of urban development.

Overall, a major conclusion of this study relates to the point that public participation itself may be a limited term. In understanding the concept of public participation, and investigating means of implementing alternative participation procedures, a broader perspective may be more fitting. Factors addressed by such a perspective would relate to the actors involved and relevant decision making processes, and not just the participating public and
the factors influencing their success or otherwise in public participation.

Public participation processes do provide a useful starting point for understanding the decision making processes governing the allocation of resources within any system, as illustrated by the case study. Furthermore, the concept of public participation provides a useful benchmark with which to monitor the efficacy of institutional arrangements for urban development.
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