

Lincoln University Digital Thesis

Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- you will use the copy only for the purposes of research or private study
- you will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate
- you will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

THE CHRISTCHURCH GREENBELT - A CULTURAL ICON

Acknowledging Intangible Values in Resource Decision Making

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science
in Resource Management

by

Rachel Puentener

Centre for Resource Management
Lincoln University

1993

ABSTRACT

The greenbelt policy in Christchurch has recently been the subject of much local publicity. This has been in reaction to development proposals in the greenbelt, and changing regional policies required under the Resource Management Act. This paper is interested in why this issue has generated such concern amongst the local Christchurch community. It traces the greenbelt's historical and cultural origins as a means to understanding its significance. It finds that the greenbelt policy has become a symbol for intangible values about the relationship between the urban and the rural environment. While the term may not be appropriate under the new planning environment, the concept remains an important icon. The challenge for planning is to recognise that such intangible values are not only valid, but significant. Resistance to change will continue until such values are recognised and respected. It is only from here that new, more appropriate concepts may emerge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would very much like to thank all those people who helped me get through this project. Thanks to my class friends, in particular my fellow 'groupies', Margie Kilvington, Jo Whittle, Ali Carlin and Todd Taiepa. It was good to be able to share the trials and tribulations with you, to discuss new ideas, and share thoughts. A special thanks to Roy Montgomery, our supervisor, whose ideas and advice helped form this project into something that kept me interested until the end.

Thanks also to my family, whose love and support comforted me a great deal, and to David, my 'song and dance' man.

I would also like to acknowledge those people who gave their time and shared their thoughts on the subject: Harvey Perkins, Val Kirby, Simon Swaffield, Graeham Densem, Allan Shepherd, Keith Morrison, Andrew Craig, Max Barber, Bill Karaitiana, Lynne Lochhead, and Colin Fussell. I appreciated it greatly.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Living beside the greenbelt all of my growing life has meant that the rural landscape and its inhabitants have become an important part of my 'sense of place'. The thought that in the future it might be covered in houses is a depressing one. This led to my basic assumption, shared no doubt by many who live at the city's edge, that the greenbelt is a good thing and that it should be retained. This made it difficult for me to formulate a research question that was not going to be a self-fulfilling prophesy. It was not until I was challenged on my basic assumption about the greenbelt that I was made aware of the need to re-examine the concept of the greenbelt - where and why it originated and became part of the Christchurch landscape. My understanding of the issue was also influenced by the newspaper media, who appear to have a definite view on the 'goodness' of the greenbelt. The fervour in which the greenbelt issue has been debated signified to me that there was more going on than protecting soil and water, which is often the catch-cry for saving the greenbelt. In unearthing the historical and cultural origins of the greenbelt the reason for peoples' passion towards the greenbelt issue became easier to understand. However, these reasons still remain difficult to voice, as they have more to do with gut feelings than 'rational' ones. I believe these values 'of the heart' are just as important as those that may have a more 'logical' basis, and that they must be validated and respected if more than 'expert' opinions are to decide our futures.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
The greenbelt as a social construction	3
Method and Methodology	5
Outline	7
CHAPTER TWO: SETTING THE SCENE	8
The Christchurch greenbelt policy	8
The British planning influence	13
Summary	16
CHAPTER THREE: THE GREENBELT IN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS	18
The problem of the industrial city	18
Improving the industrial city	19
The Christchurch context	22
CHAPTER FOUR: VALUES UNDERLYING THE GREENBELT CONCEPT	27
The town-country dichotomy	27
The New Zealand arcadia	28
Suburbanisation	32
CHAPTER FIVE: THE TOWN PLANNING INFLUENCE	37
Postmodernism of resistance; postmodernism of reaction	42
The Christchurch greenbelt revisited under the Resource Management Act	44
CHAPTER SIX: GREENBELT AS POLICY INSTRUMENT - GREENBELT AS ICON ...	48
The policy of containment-a negative role for the greenbelt	48
The use of the greenbelt - filling the vacuum	51
What values does the greenbelt embrace as its own? or the greenbelt becomes cultural icon	54
The greenbelt and cultural identity	54
The greenbelt-distinguishing the rural from the urban	56
CHAPTER SEVEN: NEW MEANINGS FOR THE GREENBELT IN THE 1990's	61
Homogeneity and Place	61
Environmentalism	63
Acknowledging intangible values in the world of 'rationality'	63
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY	70
APPENDICES	76

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to assess the current and future role of the Christchurch greenbelt. To do this requires an understanding of the predominant values inherent in the concept. Analysing the historical and cultural context of the greenbelt will serve to highlight these values while giving some ideas on their significance for the Christchurch community.

This assessment comes from a Christchurch city resident who has grown up alongside a greenbelt area. Subsequently its focus is on the meaning of the greenbelt from an urban perspective. Although the Christchurch greenbelt was established as an urban planning tool to contain the physical size of the city and implicitly reflected urban concerns, recent discussions have focused on the greenbelt boundary and land uses within the greenbelt. In contrast, this study seeks to take a step back and analyse what the greenbelt 'construction' means for the urban community and why or if it is appropriate for the needs of the Christchurch community. This is especially pertinent at the moment with the revising of regional and district policies required under the Resource Management Act 1991, and the fervent reaction to this from the Christchurch community.

The greenbelt can be viewed as a planning 'tool' or policy 'instrument' and can be defined in terms of function rather than physical form. It is the importance of these functions that determines the importance or relevance of the greenbelt (Pullen 1977:7).

The primary function of greenbelts has been to guide and contain urban development. There are several reasons why this is seen as important. Urban containment can help ensure the efficient use of land and delivery of services in the city. It protects valuable agricultural land and other

natural resources from urban sprawl, and it protects amenity values of open space and recreational possibilities. The objectives of the Christchurch greenbelt policy reflect these roles, while including more specific functions such as the protection of the Christchurch International Airport from urban encroachment, and the recognition of the special characteristics of the Port Hills and their value to the region (Canterbury United Council 1985:24).

A variety of land uses and activities exist in New Zealand greenbelts: agricultural and horticultural production, ranging from small blocks to large, and from part-time farmers to full-time; rural-residential dwellings for rural-oriented workers and urban commuters and retired people; recreational and environmental uses; small-scale rural industries; commercial forestry; and large scale institutional uses such as airports, prisons, and defence establishments (Barker & Brown 1979:4).

There are many issues endemic to the peri-urban¹ area that arise due to the proximity of city and countryside. For example there is continuing pressure by developers to subdivide the valuable land adjacent to the city especially in areas with high land values such as the North West area of Christchurch. This is especially the case when this pressure involves high quality soils as is often the case in Christchurch, as much of the green belt in the north consists of class 1 and 2 soils. A land use change to residential is generally an irreversible change, and due to the finite nature of good quality soils this is a serious issue for the sustainability of land resources for future generations. There has also been pressure for residential subdivision in the past which could adversely affect ecological, scenic and recreational values, such as at Travis swamp, and the Port Hills.

¹ The peri-urban area is also known as the 'urban/rural fringe', and the 'urban fringe' and is defined as the edge of the urban area or where town and country meet. However, in reality there is seldom a sudden change from town to country, and so the peri-urban area signifies more of a zone in transition between the purely rural and purely urban areas (Hinman 1988:2). See Appendix One for characteristics of the urban fringe.

Another related issue is the rising land values or 'hope' value associated with rural land adjacent to the city. The resulting increased rates faced by farmers near the city may reduce the economic viability of their current operations, and make them more likely to subdivide their land for financial reasons. Such land is often bought by speculators in the hope of future residential development.

The subdivision of rural land into smaller rural blocks is also a topical issue. There is the question of the viable size of land holdings which is affected by changing economic conditions. There is also the fear that small rural blocks are becoming residential homes for urban workers, and consequently the productive capability of the land and its rural character are being lost. Increased intensity in land use also raises other issues such as the quantity and quality of the water supply, and the adverse effects of increased pesticides and fertilisers. This is of particular concern to the tangata whenua where the significance of the water body has more than just physical implications. These are issues that are coming under wider scrutiny, especially in land close to the urban population.

Such issues are the basis for most discussions about the greenbelt (see for example Barker & Brown 1979, Pullen 1977, Simmons 1991, Meister 1986, De Luca 1991, Tremaine 1985, and Stroud 1986). This report does not intend to deal with these more pragmatic debates, but instead steps in to ask what have been the underlying theories or values upon which the greenbelt has been based. Often it is these questions that are taken for granted but they are important for making the other practical issues more clear.

The greenbelt as a social construction

The greenbelt is a form of territoriality, as defined by Sack (1986) and can be understood as a

"historically sensitive use of space", which is socially constructed and influenced by "who is controlling whom and why" (Ibid:3).

As a social construction the greenbelt is consequently value-laden. Discussions over land use in the greenbelt mentioned above includes value judgements such as the need to save quality soils. Other beliefs about the relationship between town and country, notions of the 'goodness' of open space for urban dwellers and 'badness' of urban sprawl, and the role of planning for these values are also important factors behind the greenbelt construction. These values are historically and culturally constructed, and will vary in expression between places and over time. A major part of this analysis is concerned with tracing these values and their relationship to the context of the Christchurch greenbelt.

The greenbelt in Christchurch was originally introduced as an urban planning tool from British planning law, specifically to check urban spread in the city. However, the strong political feelings that accompany discussion about the greenbelt today suggest that it has become more than just a planning tool for controlling activities. Although some of this is perhaps a 'NIMBY' (not in my back yard) response, much of this interest in the greenbelt goes beyond those directly affected by it. This signifies that something bigger than at first appears is at stake here. In some respects the greenbelt could be said to have become a shared 'narrative' for the Christchurch community with a positive cultural meaning, as opposed to it existing as a 'negative zone' in which certain uses are forbidden. Indeed, the Christchurch community's perspective of the greenbelt could even be compared to the strong feelings people have over the existence of National Parks in New Zealand - even if people don't directly use it or see it every day, its mere existence has value.

If the greenbelt is a strongly supported local policy, this raises issues about its conflict with other

strongly held cultural perceptions such as the 'quarter-acre pavlova paradise' and a home of one's own. A strictly enforced greenbelt policy will eventually mean increased density housing if the population grows, leading to the assertion that the greenbelt 'strangles' the city. This begs the question about the appropriate density and population of cities - a highly debatable topic but one this report does not aim to address. The greenbelt, then, does not exist unproblematically but has wider ramifications that go beyond the scope of this report.

Related to this is the fact that the greenbelt is a response to very real land use issues at the urban fringe. The reality that land is a finite resource results in pertinent questions about the best use of land in the fringe, and as already mentioned, issues relating to this dominate the literature. Under the Town and Country Planning Act (1953 and 1977) the regional and territorial councils established the greenbelt policy around Christchurch to address some of these concerns. As part of this process there has been, in the past, formulation of proactive policies on settlement dispersal into smaller urban centres around Christchurch.

These policies reflect certain ideologies or beliefs concerned with planning that are important to uncover in an analysis of the underlying values of the greenbelt policy. The study will therefore also discuss the practise and ideologies of planning, in particular the change caused by the Resource Management Act and what this means for the future of the greenbelt in Christchurch.

Method and Methodology

My methodology was based on my belief that qualitative values are as important as quantifiable values, and that it is a fallacy to believe that 'objective' viewpoints are more valid. However, I was unsure how this could be a starting point for a research project. Admitting a bias seemed to suggest that the project would simply be an exercise in sophistry. However, with the help of continuing questioning by my supervisor as to why I had these instinctive feelings about the

goodness of the greenbelt, I was forced to examine just why I felt the way I did. In this way the process was one of bringing to light the values that underlie the greenbelt concept. Although I had a general feeling about what the reasons might be, it was not until about two-thirds of the way through that I really felt I had discovered something. To me it felt significant, and gave me a real sense of understanding of why the greenbelt seemed important to the Christchurch community.

The principle source of my information came from reading secondary sources. Initially I focused on anything that mentioned the greenbelt, but as I came to understand what exactly I was trying to discover, my reading broadened into areas of planning, landscape design, humanistic geography, and place theory. Towards the very end I landed in the area of phenomenology, where I found a definition of what I had been trying to do. "... to clarify the meaning of concepts, symbols, and aspirations as they pertain to space and place" (Yi-Fu Tuan 196:25). I was relieved to have found a niche in the area of ideas and values, as initially I felt I was going to have to plod through a discussion of the greenbelt as a pragmatic policy. This excited me - NOT.

Informal interviews with people directly involved in the greenbelt policy and academics thinking in similar areas, helped clarify and expand my ideas, keep me on track, and give me confidence that others could relate to what I was trying to say. I also used primary sources in the form of newspaper articles, letters to the editor, and recent submissions to the Regional Council on the greenbelt policy. These were important and interesting sources of information from which I gleaned general feelings about the greenbelt and its value to people.

Working with four other masters students was also an important part of the process, especially in the latter stages. Here we shared ideas and grappled with unfamiliar concepts put forward by

our supervisor, and how they might apply to our fields of research. It was fascinating to see the emergence of similar concerns over epistemology in the different research contexts, and as a result we felt that in certain ways they all supported each other, to form a kind of 'package'.

Although quite geographical in nature, I feel the project is valuable for resource management as often not enough thought is given to understanding something, before we rush out and do things to improve it. I remain committed to the belief that intangible values are very important to any resource management decisions, and that they should be accorded as much recognition in decision making.

Outline

After an account of the establishment and development of the greenbelt policy in Christchurch, chapter two goes on to compare the Christchurch context with the London scene from where the greenbelt policy originated. Chapter three will then take a historical look at what influenced the greenbelt concept, tracing its origins to utopian movements in Britain that arose in response to the negative effects of the laissez-faire industrial city. Chapter four will then analyse the underlying values of these 19th century ideas, in particular the influence of the town/country dichotomy and the dual perception of the city. These historical and cultural developments in chapters three and four will also be related to the New Zealand and Christchurch context. Chapter five situates the greenbelt policy in its town planning context and analyses the changes that are taking place there. This includes looking at the Resource Management Act and what this means for the Christchurch greenbelt policy. Chapter six draws on the previous chapters in a discussion about the cultural significance of the greenbelt, identifying its 'meaning' for the Christchurch community. Chapter seven and the conclusion follows from the discussion in chapter six looking at the new meanings of the greenbelt in the 1990's and considers where we might go from here.

CHAPTER TWO

SETTING THE SCENE

This chapter provides a descriptive account of the formation of the greenbelt policy in Christchurch under the Town and Country Planning Acts (1953 & 1977). It sets the Christchurch greenbelt policy in its present planning context, looking at the planning rationale for the greenbelt and compares this to its London counterpart, from where it originated.

The Christchurch greenbelt policy

The Christchurch greenbelt was originally proposed in the late 1940's as a means of defining an outer limit to the city. The post-war years were a time of suburban growth in Christchurch encouraged by the government housing schemes of the 1930's, and the increase in car ownership (Eldred-Grigg 1982:175). An urban fence was seen as necessary due to the fact that Christchurch had few natural barriers to the urban sprawl that was occurring (Barber 1991:3). The main rationale for the greenbelt zone was to prevent urban sprawl and thereby avoid the loss of rural resources, while also encouraging greater efficiency in providing public services in the city (Ibid:3).

Under the Town and Country Planning Act (1953) and with the establishment of the Christchurch Regional Planning Authority in 1954 the policy gained a statutory framework. In the Planning Authority's first regional scheme (Christchurch Regional Planning Scheme 1959) a rural zone around the main Christchurch urban area was defined, and this became the basis for the definition between urban and rural around Christchurch for the next ten years (Barber 1991:3).

After the Local Government Act of 1974 the regional planning area was extended and the former Christchurch Regional Planning Authority became the Canterbury Regional Planning Authority

(later to become the Canterbury United Council in 1980) (Barber 1991:3). Its regional scheme, which was the second review of the 1959 regional scheme, differed from previous schemes in its proactive approach of promoting a settlement strategy for the region. The greenbelt, which had previously been subject to relaxation in response to the growth of Christchurch², was strengthened. The new scheme opted for a growth strategy which would hold the extension of the urban area of Christchurch while encouraging growth beyond the greenbelt to other urban centres such as Kaiapoi, Rangiora, Woodend and Rolleston (Hinman 1988:4) (see figure one).

The changed focus of this second review was strongly influenced by the new Town and Country Planning Act 1977 (TCPA) that was brought in while the regional scheme was under review.³

Included in the Act, in section three, entitled 'Matters of National Importance' was the requirement that regional and district schemes recognise and provide for:

"The avoidance of encroachment of urban development on, and the protection of, land having a high actual or potential value for the production of food...

" [T]he prevention of sporadic subdivision and urban development in rural areas

"[T]he avoidance of unnecessary expansion of urban areas into rural areas in or adjoining cities".

The regional scheme had to include a statement of the objectives and policies for the future

² Land in the greenbelt was sometimes purchased in the expectation that it would be changed to a residential zoning in the future. For example Waimairi Council purchased Nunweek Park in north-west Christchurch many years ago with a view to residential development being extended to it (Planning Tribunal C18/89 1988:8).

³ The first review, the regional scheme of 1971 was due for another review in 1978. However, with the extension of the region under the Councils authority in 1974, and the new Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) of 1977, the review became a lengthy process. Due to the time lag anticipated (under the TCPA a comprehensive survey of the region was required prior to the preparation of the scheme) an 'Indicative Plan' for the interim period was prepared (Millar 1977). This was published in 1976.

development of the region, and how these were to be implemented. Included in the Regional Planning Scheme (Section 1: Settlement Distribution 1985) were objectives and policies for the green belt (see appendix two).

A major feature of the TCPA 1977 was the requirement that district schemes conform with the regional scheme (s.37). Prior to the mid 1970's the district schemes were fairly loosely defined. For example, in the peri-urban area there were few controls on dwellings and many subdivisions of 5, 10 and 20 acres were created (Hinman 1988:3). Changes to district schemes were therefore inevitable after 1977, although in some cases these were appealed by the district councils. However, the rulings supported the regional scheme's need for tighter controls to ensure the preservation of rural land in particular from residential use (Ibid:3).

There was also some conflict between district and regional councils after the Regional Planning Scheme on Settlement Distribution came into force in September 1985. A series of hearings over the review of the Waimairi District Scheme⁴ in which the Waimairi Council sought to change some areas zoned rural under the Regional Scheme, to residential zones, illustrated this conflict.⁵ These hearings were part of a series of six appeals heard by the Tribunal in May 1988 and all concerned land in the greenbelt (decision numbers C46/88, C18/89, C20/89, C21/89, C22/89, C23/89). Five of the appeals to change the greenbelt zone were overruled. The main reason given was that the changes sought would mean a failure to give effect to the Regional Planning Scheme's objective of containing the Christchurch urban area carried out through the greenbelt policy.

⁴ District Schemes are required to be reviewed every five years

⁵ Under the TCPA disputes such as these can be taken to the Planning Tribunal, who then decides whether there should be a change to the Regional Scheme or an amendment to the District Scheme.

Appeals to the greenbelt zoning were argued on a number of matters. These included the view that the disputed area lacked amenity values, and that there was inability to develop the land for agriculture due to its high 'speculative' value (C46/88). The blocks proximity to residential development was said to render the land unsuitable for intensive horticultural development for which it was zoned, due to the inherent conflicts between the two uses (C18/89 & C23/89), and it was proposed that the area constituted a zoning anomaly as the land quality was no longer able to support the horticultural use for which it was zoned (C20/89 & C21/89 & C22/89). It was also argued that there was a need for an urban land bank in the NW sector of Christchurch (C18/89). All the cases argued that the greenbelt would not be undermined in the process, and in some cases (C18/89 & C23/89) argued that a more defensible greenbelt would be created.

The one case which was rezoned out of the greenbelt to residential was justified by the Planning Tribunal because "it will not affect the general intent and purpose of the regional scheme" due to its small size (1.8 ha). It was reiterated that the regional scheme is broad in scope and effect and not site specific, and that the amount of land concerned was so small that it would not even be identifiable on the regional planning scheme map (Planning Tribunal C20/89 1988:5-7).

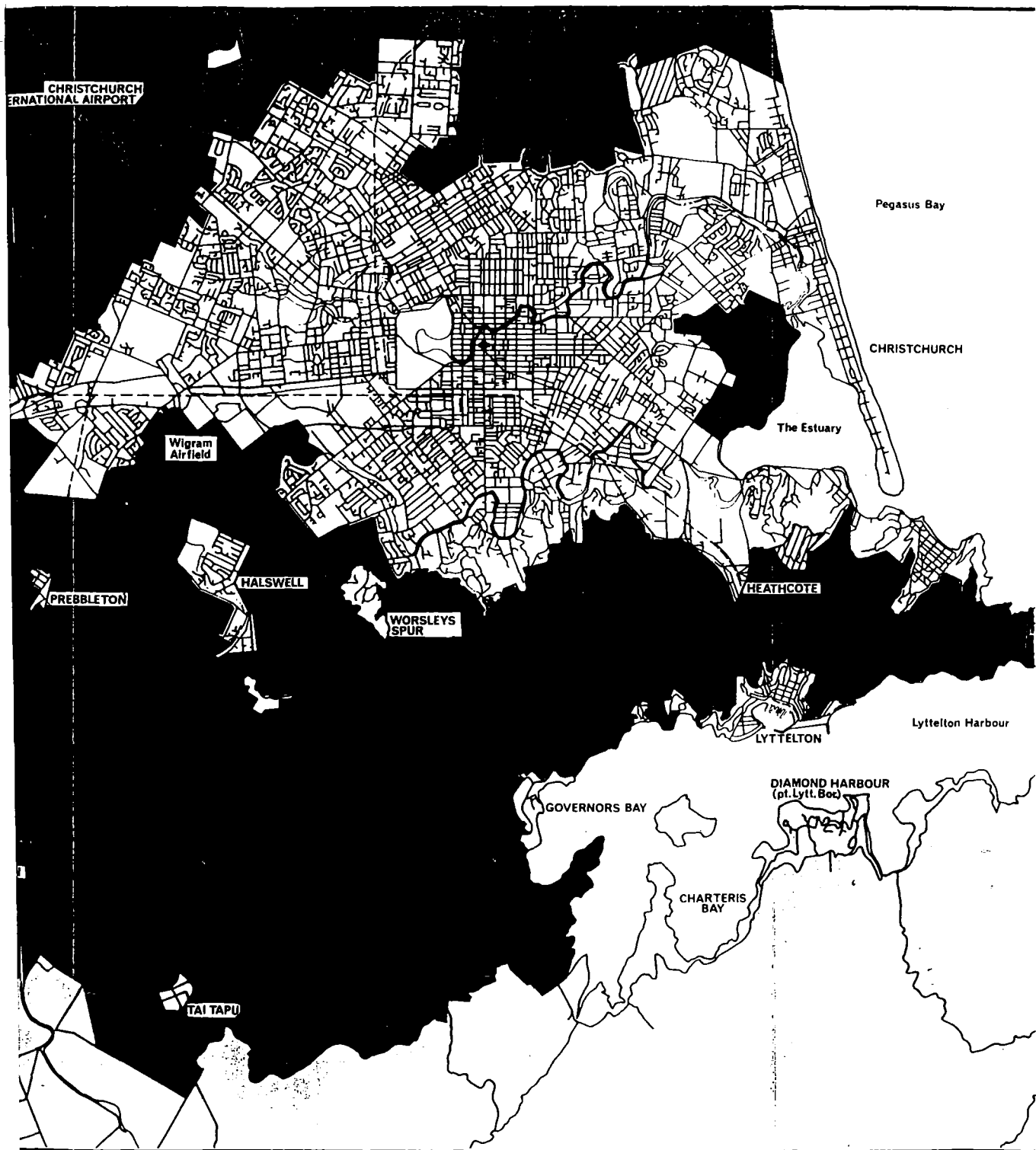
The results from these hearings, as well as from the Annual Monitoring Reports of the Regional Planning Scheme (required under the Regional Planning Scheme 1985) are used as evidence to support the view that the greenbelt policy has been upheld and serves its purposes. Thus it is said that the greenbelt, at least from 1985, has so far been successful in fulfilling its objectives (pers.comm. Max Barber 1993; pers.comm. Allan Shepherd 1993)⁶. The greenbelt policy,

⁶ The relative success of the Christchurch greenbelt for retaining urban sprawl has also been influenced by Local Government reforms in 1974 and 1989. These reforms gave the Canterbury Regional Council more power over District and City Council policies. Amalgamation of the various councils within the city into the Christchurch City Council also helped increase the strength of the greenbelt policy.

FIGURE ONE: Regional Planning Map No.1, sheet no.3

Canterbury Regional Planning Scheme 1985

Dark area = greenbelt



however, has not been watertight, and there are exceptions to its general success. For example, draft change no.1 (January 1986) amended the Regional Planning Scheme 1985 by excluding three blocks at Halswell, Templeton and Harewood from the greenbelt and including them in the urban area.

Under the new Resource Management Act (1991) changed planning objectives and methods put the future of the greenbelt as it has existed up until now in doubt. The historical rationale of the Christchurch greenbelt as containing urban spread is going to have to be re-examined in light of the objectives of the Resource Management Act.

The British planning influence

The Christchurch greenbelt was directly modelled on the London greenbelt. The London greenbelt, established in the 1930's but not properly enforced until 1947, was part of British planning theory which had a strong influence on western countries (including the United States) in the post-war period (Whyte 1968:152). New Zealand with its strong British ties was especially influenced, the Town and Country Planning Act 1953 being strongly based on the 1947 British Act of the same name.

The first London greenbelt was established with the Green Belt Act 1938. This national initiative was a response to growing concerns about London's physical growth (Benevolo 1980:930). The Act, drawn up by Raymond Unwin, a proponent of the Garden city movement (discussed in chapter three) emphasised the role of the greenbelt for recreation and amenity purposes within easy reach of the city. This original greenbelt was not a continuous belt but a series of spaces woven into the built up areas, making a roughly circular pattern around London (Whyte 1968:153).

After the Second World War there was another push for the greenbelt, with the emphasis being

the containment of the post-war boom. The greenbelt in this case was to be a huge restraining ring around London, about five miles wide (Whyte 1968:154). This was drawn up by Sir Patrick Abercrombie in the 1944 plan for Greater London, one of the first attempts at comprehensive planning on a regional level.

The support for this constraining belt, which formed the basis of the present London Greenbelt, was directly related to the Barlow Commission (1937-40). The Barlow Commission was set up in Britain after the depression to address the issue of regional growth differences brought about by a changing industrial sector. It assumed that the concentration of industry and population into large centres was detrimental and looked at possible remedies to this (Hall 1987:89). London in particular was identified as being an urgent problem. The Commission looked at the technical problems of controlling the physical growth of cities and of preserving agricultural land through the establishment of a more effective system of town and country planning (Ibid:87-93).

The Barlow Report was submitted to Government in 1939 and during the war several reports were written concerning various aspects of it. These reports formed the post-war urban and regional planning system and legislation in Britain including the TCPA 1947 (Ibid:87-93).⁷

Abercrombie's Greater London Plan was one of these reports. Abercrombie set about trying to plan for massive decentralisation of people from the inner, more congested part of London to the planned satellite New Towns beyond the city boundary (Ibid:97-99). The objectives of the Greater London Plan of 1944 were to restrict the growth of London, to prevent coalescence of settlements and to safeguard land for agriculture and recreation (Munton 1983:18)

⁷ The Commission reflected a new focus in planning on the regional/national scale and its exhaustive and compelling arguments gave it an authority that has since been hard to challenge (Hall 1987:87).

The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 provided the institutional framework for the plan. The key to the Act was that it nationalised the right to develop land. This was necessary to ensure effective public control over the development and use of land in the greenbelt. However the Act provided for financial compensation to landowners for loss of development rights.⁸ The Act also created new local planning authorities charged with plan-making and development control, with broad powers to freeze the greenbelt land against development (Hall 1987:108-109).

In 1955 a Government circular, containing the first and only central government statement on the greenbelt, was distributed to advocate a more general use of greenbelts beyond London.⁹ According to this official statement the aim of greenbelts was 1) to check the further sprawl of built up areas; 2) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; 3) to preserve the special character of towns (Blacksell & Gilg 1981:21). Other objectives assigned to the greenbelt by local planners, politicians and academics have included provision of open space for countryside recreation, the protection of agricultural land, and the maintenance of amenity in the urban fringe (Munton 1983:15).

The history of the London greenbelt since its inception has been characterised by a series of swings between emphasis on containment on the one hand, and emphasis on use of the greenbelt for recreation and amenity on the other (Whyte 1968:156). For example, Raymond Unwin's plan of the 1930's and the promotion in the 1970's of recreation opportunities, can be contrasted with the 1940-60 trend of urban containment (Munton 1983:15). Unwin's plan for recreation purposes was radical in that it demanded public land acquisition on a large scale and of land with

⁸ The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act with its various amendments (mainly relating to the financial compensation section) was consolidated into the Town and Country Planning Act 1962 and again in 1971 (Hall 1987:108-113).

⁹ Greenbelts in one form or another now cover 15 000 sqkm and are found around nearly all of Britain's major cities (Blacksell & Gilg 1981:21).

high development potential and market value (Munton 1983:17). Later in the 1970's it was argued that all land in the greenbelt should have a positive purpose, such as for quality farmland, minerals, scenic, recreational or other beneficial uses (Munton 1983:20).

There are varying opinions about the success of London's greenbelt. Some say it has been successful as it has saved land from urban encroachment. Critics, however, point to the 'leap frogging' effect with development moving to areas beyond the greenbelt creating costly journeys to work, and higher housing densities and land prices within London (Munton 1983:4).

Conflict with carrying out the greenbelt policy in Britain has been due to the central government releasing land from the greenbelt. For the central government the releasing of relatively small pieces of land from the greenbelt does not affect the strategic objectives of the greenbelt, but at the local level authorities see it as undermining public confidence in the greenbelt policy (Munton 1983:23). It is said that these occasional changes in the greenbelt results in a greater number of applications by developers for greenbelt sites (Ibid:23).

Summary

Urban and regional planning in the form of the Town and Country Planning Acts of New Zealand have been strongly influenced by the post-war British planning system. The Christchurch greenbelt with its inception in the 1940's follows the British example of the London Greenbelt and its beginnings in the 1930's. Both were given authority under the Town and Country Planning Acts in the following decade and administered by local authorities. The greenbelt policy in Britain however is a national statute, while the Christchurch policy was initiated on a regional level. The greenbelt legislation is an expression of the belief in top-down planning and public body intervention that prevailed at the time.

It is worth noting that the emergence of the greenbelt policy in Britain was a direct outcome of the Barlow Commission's concern with city expansion and was based on thoughts at the time of the most appropriate size of cities. The idea that cities could be 'too big' was judged by looking at the United States experience of cities and conurbation (pers.comm. Val Kirby 1993). The main objective of the greenbelt concept then, was to contain the physical growth of the city.

The most obvious difference between the London and Christchurch context is the population to land ratio. New Zealand with its low population and its relatively large land mass is not faced with the pressures felt in Britain. A result of the population pressure in Britain is the tendency for 'leap-frogging' across the greenbelt. This has not been a problem in the Christchurch context. In terms of secondary objectives the London greenbelt emphasises a recreation role, while the Christchurch greenbelt's focus is on the conservation of productive soils at the urban fringe.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GREENBELT IN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The problem of the industrial city

As identified in the previous chapter the greenbelt policy has its origins in Britain. The London Greenbelt policy in the 1930's and 1940's was a response to an ongoing discussion in Britain about the quality of city life.

Prior to the industrial revolution cities were small as most people lived and worked in the countryside. However, with the shift to machine-based industry in about 1760 and the Enclosure Movement which forced people off the land, the size of cities grew enormously (La Gory & Pipkin 1981:68). The facilities of the city were unable to cope with the scale of inward migration and population increase, resulting in the familiar image of the degraded industrial city we see in the work of Charles Dickens - crowded, polluted, unhygienic, and chaotic with its victims being the poverty-stricken working class.

The chaos and lack of design of the industrial city was also due to the underlying notion of utilitarianism which translated into the political practice of laissez-faire (Mumford 1961:452). The doctrine of laissez-faire emerged from Adam Smith's theory of capitalism in his influential book "The Wealth of Nations" of 1776 (Bassett 1985:15). The justification for a laissez-faire approach was a reaction to the power that the State had played in the past with its system of privileges and trade regulations. The utilitarians wanted to reduce government intervention to a minimum and let the market rule. Through unrestricted competition it was argued, order would emerge, whereas rational planning would only interfere with divine economic providence (Mumford 1961:453).

However, the reality in the city was overcrowding, with housing left to speculative builders who built without regard to daylight, water or sanitary facilities which lead to outbreaks of disease (Bassett 1985:16). Those that could afford to, moved away from the densities at the centre and shifted to the outskirts, and the degree of separation between houses became a symbol of class (Benevolo 1980:754).

Improving the Industrial City

There were a host of reactions to the 'evils' of the industrial city in the 19th century and what could be done about it. Much of the impetus for this came from the opinion that if the cities were cleaned up the inhabitants would be more contented and thus better workers, which would create more profits (Tipples 1992:30). The three ways espoused by various influential individuals were

- 1) to start a new society in another land through colonisation
- 2) to redevelop the existing city
- 3) to start afresh to build the ideal community within the country (pers.comm. Densem 1993).

All three approaches were employed to tackle the problems of the city through comprehensive planning. Systematic colonisation, as practised by Wakefield was seen as the solution to Britain's population problem, and will be discussed more fully in relation to New Zealand later.

The alleviation of some of the symptoms of industrial growth within the city was promoted through various reports and Royal Commissions during the 1830's and 1840's. Part of this was based on the belief that access to open green space was important for the welfare of the workers. Providing fresh air and exercise would "promote the health and comfort of the inhabitants", according to a Select Committee on Public Walks in 1833, and in the 1840's and 1850's legislation was passed to provide for public open space (Tipples 1992:30). The open space

advocates also managed to halt the system of Enclosure, preserving some Commons such as Epping Forest for public use (Snyder 1990:32).

The third method was the formation of whole new towns, where comprehensive planning could provide the ideal living conditions for an urban population. The most famous and influential of these plans was from Ebenezer Howard. In 1898 Howard wrote "Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform" which was revised and republished as "Garden Cities of Tomorrow" in 1902. The problem that "Garden Cities of Tomorrow" addressed was the increasing size and chaos of the industrial city and the decreasing population of the country districts.

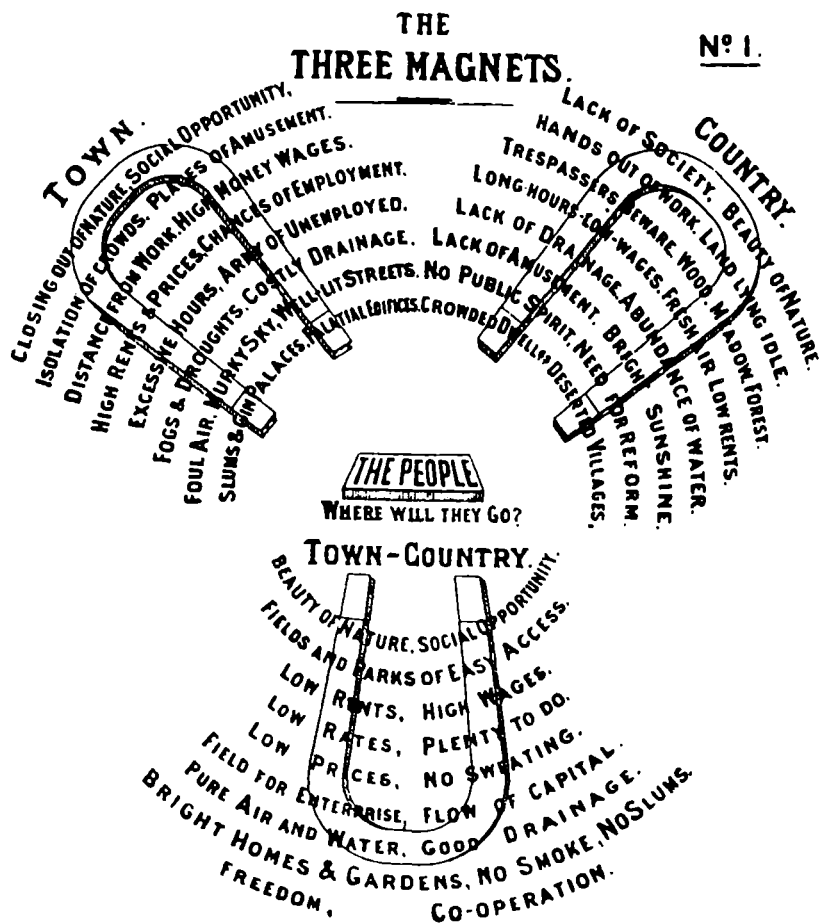
Howard had been strongly influenced by the utopian writers of the 19th century. These included Robert Owens, the philanthropic industrialist, who in 1813 wrote "A New View of Society" which proposed the building of small balanced communities in the countryside based around the new form of industrial organisation (Mumford 1944:392). Industrialists such as George Cadbury were influenced by Owens ideas when starting new communities in association with their large factories situated in the country. Bournville (1879) and Port Sunlight in 1888 were two initiatives that were planned with generous allotments of open space and low densities (Ibid:393).

Other important influences on Howard were James Silk Buckingham who in 1849 constructed a plan for an ideal city with a limited population, and Edward Gibbon Wakefield's ideas in the "Art of Colonisation" (1849). Howard used these and other influences in a unique combination to form the Garden City model. Here there was to be a "migratory movement of population from our overcrowded centres to sparsely settled rural districts" and to a centre where "fresh air, sunlight, breathing room and playing room...shall be still retained in all needed abundance..." (Howard 1946:127). This Garden City was to be a synthesis of all that was good of town and country, as illustrated in figure two, - the beauty of nature and the social opportunities of the

town.

The balance between town and country in the Garden City was to be maintained through a limit on population numbers and a greenbelt which would secure for the surrounding town accessible countryside and agricultural opportunities. Plentiful public open spaces would also be provided within the town.

FIGURE TWO: The synthesis of town and country (Howard 1946:46).



The Garden City Movement which was both idealistic and practical (Howard had detailed plans as to the financing of the town and land tenure) had a great influence on the establishing British planning system, and also had an international following, as similar urban concerns were on the

agenda of most Western nations at the time (Buder 1990:109;134). A Garden City Association was formed to put the ideas into practice and in 1904 the Garden City of Letchworth, (planned by Raymond Unwin) was founded, and later in 1919 Howard established Welwyn Garden City (Osborn 1946:13).

An important characteristic of Howard's Garden City concept was controlled growth and limited population. Around every garden city there was to be a permanent reserve of open country to be used for either agriculture or recreation. Just as in the walled medieval town, the modern city needed a definite size, form and boundary. Any further growth beyond the maximum size (estimated at 30 000 by Howard) would not be accommodated by crowding or sprawl as the case had been, but by movement into another garden city (Mumford 1944:397).

The architects of the first London greenbelt policy, Raymond Unwin in the 1938 plan and Patrick Abercrombie in the 1944 plan, were both strongly influenced by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement.

The Christchurch context

New Zealand, as a British colony, was strongly influenced by the debates about the ideal town that were taking place in Britain during the 19th century. Edward Gibbon Wakefield formed the New Zealand Company in 1837 to carry out his ideas on 'systematic colonisation'. According to Steven (1989) this outlet for Britain's surplus population was the main motive of colonisation, at a time when the situation in Britain was politically and socially tense, with its increasing population who were mainly poor and unemployed, and thus potentially disruptive (Ibid:22).

To attract settlers to the new land, conditions had to be better than existed in Britain, with higher wages for the workers. Land that enabled pastoral growth year round became a principal

attraction and the distinctive characteristic of New Zealand. With low input and high return, first through wool and later meat, wages were relatively good and this helped to erode the large class differences between the settlers (Steven 1989:26).

Wakefield's ideal colony was to be an agricultural settlement, a sort of pre-industrial utopia, an extension of the English system but without the poverty or overcrowding of Britain. Systematic colonisation consisted of selected emigrants from a vertical cross-section of English society (except for the lowest stratum), and although there was room for the industrious worker to move up the social scale, Wakefield intended that the class system of Britain would remain intact. This would be achieved through the setting of a 'sufficient' price on land, to ensure that labourers could not initially become landowners. In this way the close settlement that Wakefield advocated would be assured as labourers would have to live in the vicinity of the employer (Sinclair 1988:59-61).

Wellington was the first major New Zealand Company settlement, followed by Nelson in 1841. After the death of Wakefield in 1843, the New Zealand Company was wound up, but the 'systematic' principles of colonising were continued by the Otago Association and the Canterbury Association. These were inspired by Wakefield and based on the idea of establishing denominational colonies. The Canterbury Association was formed in Britain to establish a Church of England settlement. Once a site had been found and surveyed, the land was sold for a fairly high price, and the money put into a fund to assist immigrants from Britain (Sinclair 1988:76-92).

Those who had applied to the Canterbury Association for land before 1850 were entitled, for 150 pounds, to two land orders - one for a rural section of fifty acres and the other for a town section of a quarter of an acre (NZFUW 1989:7).

The town belt (Fitzgerald, Bealey, Deans and Moorhouse Avenues) distinguished between the town and country sections. Although some rural blocks were established as agricultural units, most of the blocks directly surrounding the town belt were surveyed and subdivided in the hope of making money. The speculative nature of these farms close to the town belt is recorded in land transactions in the informal histories of St Albans and Sydenham (NZFUW 1977 & 1989).

Apart from the farms closer to Christchurch which supplied the town with its milk and vegetable supply, most land was held by large-scale pastoralists who, due to high wool prices, rapidly became the elite in Canterbury. As there were transport difficulties in getting produce to the towns, agricultural farms were generally held at a family subsistence level by poorer people. Wakefield's ideas for the ideal agricultural based colony were also undermined later after the Canterbury Association stopped functioning in 1853. The Provincial Government who took over the colonisation of Canterbury, were less concerned with the establishment of the English class system and subsequently screening of immigrants was no longer a priority (Sinclair 1988:99).

The dominance of the wool-growing estates was felt politically, economically and socially in Christchurch. The Provincial Government which ruled Canterbury until 1876 was made up of the land holding gentry. Thus there was concern when Christchurch started developing industries unrelated to the rural sector. The unchecked growth of towns was seen in Rolleston and the landed gentry's view to be "sooner or later disastrous" (Eldred-Grigg 1982:36). However, although Christchurch grew in size, land remained the symbol of status and power in Canterbury for many years (Ibid:39).

Christchurch had the appearance of an English rural town with much open space and trees, with sheep grazing in Hagley Park and wheat growing within the city boundaries (Eldred-Grigg 1982:37). The influence of the debates of the 1830's and 1840's in Britain about the

improvement of the industrial city and provision of open space had influenced the establishment of Christchurch (Tipples 1992:31). Even before the first Canterbury settlers had arrived, land had been set aside for public parks. Plans for Christchurch included a Botanical Garden, Latimer and Cramner Squares, Market Place (Victoria Square), Hagley Park, and public space along the banks of the Avon River (Challenger 1979:9).

These open spaces, including the town belt, were soon planted with English trees. Residential gardens, full of English flowers and shrubs, were also a bid to be reminded of home in the monotony of the Canterbury plains of flax and cabbage trees (Tipples 1992:31). Unlike Dunedin, Wellington or Auckland, Christchurch did not sprout native bush when land was left fallow, and so the exotic trees dominated, giving Christchurch its distinctive English character. For example, the 1903 Cyclopaedia of New Zealand described the St Albans borough as having

"... the appearance and the urban atmosphere of an English town, and almost suggests the idea of having been imported straight from England, to the special order of English people who have come to reside in New Zealand" (NZFUW 1989:60).

This planting was aided by the Christchurch Beautifying Association, founded in 1897 and based on the Amenities Society in Dunedin (Tipples 1992:32). The Amenities Society was the first environmental organisation in New Zealand and followed trends that were occurring overseas. They were concerned with open spaces and greenery - the lungs of the city, and with the scenic and artistic improvement of the city (Bassett 1985:83).

The town belt however, which consisted of an unformed road, two chains wide at Fitzgerald, Bealey, Deans and Moorhouse Avenues, did not last as a reserve and was later developed into tree-lined roading. Its failure to remain as a reserve was probably due to the generous amount of open space provided in Christchurch by Hagley and the other city parks. Also unlike the Dunedin and Wellington town belts, it was not covered in bush nor was it difficult to survey,

which is partly the reason for the existence of those cities' belts (Bassett 1985).

Later Christchurch was referred to as 'The Garden City', due to its pre-planned open spaces.

This 'garden city' plan was due to the influence of Wakefield and others at the time. It was these ideas which had also inspired Howard's Garden City Movement.

CHAPTER FOUR

VALUES UNDERLYING THE GREENBELT CONCEPT

" ... and the building of more [houses], strongly, beautifully and in groups of limited extent, kept in proportion to their streams and walled round, so that there may be ... no festering and wretched suburb anywhere, but clean and busy streets within, and the open country without, with a belt of beautiful garden and orchards around the wall..." (John Ruskin quoted in Mumford 1961).

The town - country dichotomy

The importance placed on open space and access to the countryside by the utopian reformers of the 19th century reflects the long-held tension between the town and the country. This in turn reflects a dualistic perception of the city that has occurred throughout Western history. Steiner (1976) takes a broad look back throughout the ages and highlights the changing views humans have had of the city. Generally there have been two perspectives of the city, exemplified in the Greek and Judaic cultures. The Greeks exalted the city as the only place where art, politics and philosophy could exist, whereas the Hebrew tradition with its focus on the return to Eden, saw the city, (Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah) as a symbol of sin and a straying from God.

The western tradition embraces both tendencies. We uphold the city as the place of culture and learning. For example, we link our history to the different epochs of the city (medieval, Renaissance, baroque), although the majority of the population lived in the rural setting; our political, social, intellectual and artistic history is based on the major cities; the word 'civilisation' is a value-charged concept that has been associated with an education that is only available in the city; and poets in Western literature have praised the city to a far greater extent and long before they became "singers" of the landscape (Steiner 1976:324).

On the other hand, the pastoral genre, especially in literature and art, and its reproduction in parks and gardens, has also been a dominant part of our culture. Before the 18th century this

was not seen as contrary to an urban existence. Rather it was the projection of urban tastes and ideals on to the countryside, of arcadian romance and colourful mythology (Ibid:325). Steiner argues that it was not until the Romantic Movement of the 18th century and in particular the works of Rousseau that the ideas about town and country changed. Rousseau theorised that civilisation was tantamount to human decay and that so-called civilised man(sic) had lost the moral clarity that characterised primitive existence. It was only the 'noble savage' that was in possession of real virtue, as civilisation had made humans slave to unnatural wants, seducing them from original freedom (Flew 1979:249). Human relationships to nature could therefore only be rekindled through a radical utopia, not the mere extension of city parks (Steiner 1976:327).

This anti-urban thought of the 18th century gathered force in light of the industrial revolution and its impact on the city form and experience. The city became the target of Marxist, socialist and anarchist dissent as it was seen to represent the epitome of mature capitalism (Ibid:327). Such radical critiques of the city during this time led to social reform in the city that we still enjoy the benefits of today. It also led to the utopian visions of new ways of living, of different physical environments, that would rid us of the evils of the industrial city. It is in this climate that the British colony of New Zealand was established - a new start in a new world.

The New Zealand Arcadia

In the attempt to draw immigrants to New Zealand, the imagery of New Zealand representing the ideal society, an "arcadia", was strong. This arcadian vision was an antithesis of the industrial city. It was a place of abundance, prosperity, justice, harmony, and simplicity, a place where there was no cause for poverty or injustice, a place without the class hierarchy, a place for all to gain an improved lifestyle (Fairburn 1989:26).

This arcadian utopia was not only portrayed in New Zealand Company advertising but also

featured in colonial literature. Although there was a discrepancy between the dream and the reality, there was faith that this was only a temporary state. The tussock, swamp and bush were obstacles which would be overcome on the path to the pastoral paradise. Likewise, the Maori inhabitants were to be removed and their 'wastelands' colonised.

"...The hills that had formerly been solitary wastes were converted into smiling pastures, and fields of wheat bowed their golden heads to the summer breeze in the place of useless fern and ti-tree" (quoted from 'the Last of the Waikatos' 1873 in Jones 1989:189).

Even though the immigrants found their experiences did not match their high expectations¹⁰, they played the difference down due, in part, to their conditioning in the Arcadian vision, and also because they were reluctant to admit to themselves or their family and friends back home, that such a journey had been in vain (Fairburn 1989:22)

Part of the arcadian dream was the hope for the Just City, a place where there were no beggars, and no exploitative landlords (Jones 1989:189). In the New Zealand context this Justice was to be achieved through the ability for all to have the opportunity to be landowners. Landowning in Great Britain had only been the prerogative of the rich and so the possibility to live on the land was a great desire of the new immigrants (Eldred-Grigg 1982:39). This was supported by the originators and administrators of the early colony who saw the colony as an opportunity to give the urban under-privileged the opportunity to get onto the land (Fairburn 1975:7).

However, as already mentioned, much of the best land had been sold to those who could afford it back in Britain, and the pastoralists had the monopoly over much of the land in the South Island. The dream to get onto the land in the South Island was hindered by the 200 estates of

¹⁰ For example in 1843 workers in Nelson went on strike and petitioned the New Zealand Company about the fact that "instead of the bread tree, fields and groves that were hailed there is the flax tree in a swampy piece of ground" (Fairburn 1989:21)

landed gentry who controlled the bulk of the land and over 80% of the sheep (Eldred-Grigg 1982:42)¹¹. In line with Wakefield's plans for an agricultural colony such land monopoly was opposed by the colonial administrators, with Sir George Grey describing these elite as 'a tyranny' (Ibid:51). Objections were also made against the large pastoralists because they were perceived to be 'stifling' the towns. They were likened to the squires in England whose dominant economic, social and political presence pervaded (Hamer 1979:13).

The pressure created by the huge landholdings of an elite, and the fact that this was contrary to the aspirations of the new colony led to land reforms in the Liberal era of 1891-1912, with the passing of the Land for Settlements Acts to break up the huge farms, as well as penal rates for absentee owners and those that did not improve their properties (Hamer 1979:14). By 1925, 140 of the big properties had been expropriated and broken up into more than 2000 farms (Eldred-Grigg 1982:110). The justification for the compulsory acquisition of large estates in the debates over the 1894 Land for Settlements Bill was that the state had a duty to redistribute the land resource amongst the large number of people who wanted land, and that it was due to the laissez-faire nature of the early colony that the greedy were able to take more land than they needed (Fairburn 1989:203).

It was the ownership of land that was "the greatest teacher of morality" according to Rolleston in 1879, which was reflected later in the National Party's concept of New Zealand as a "property owners democracy" (Fairburn 1989:260).

¹¹ In the North Island settlement of immigrants onto the land was restrained by the retention of land in Maori control. The strong desire for land by the settlers led to the Land Wars in the 1860's, the subsequent confiscation of Maori lands, and other methods sanctioned by the government through legislation, to put the ownership of land in settler hands. In contrast, the alienation of land from the Maori in the South Island took place between 1844 and 1860, through the large wholesale "disposal" of Maori land, or in the terms of the time, the "extinguishment of native title". These sales of nearly all the Ngai Tahu tribal area were soon to be disputed (O'Regan 1989:242).

Within this vision was the rejection of the city, and the idealisation of the soil-based family as the foundation of social order (Fairburn 1975:8). The moral issues were black and white - the country was wholesome, while the city was impure. The country town was accepted as a civilising influence but in its becoming a city it was seen as a threat and was condemned as violating the purity of 'God's own country'. Behind this image of the evil of the city was the belief that in a primary-producing country the city was artificial, having no productive base of its own (although in fact manufacturing was an important element of the city), and that it was the breeding ground of disease, immorality and the undermining of parental authority. The city was seen as a threat to social control, with its restless and dependent wage-earning class prone to discontent (Read 1989:41).

The long depression of the 1870's and resulting unemployment, gave rise to the fear that restricted access to land was increasing the congested and degenerative nature of the city (Fairburn 1989:10). In response the state promoted closer land settlement through various schemes and policies.

The Village Settlement Scheme, instigated by Rolleston in Canterbury in the mid 1870's, was the first of such schemes, and was soon followed by the liberal reforms of the 1890's mentioned earlier. Later, the soldier settlement schemes, and various government subsidies to farmers throughout the years maintained the vision of a country of family farms (Fairburn 1975:10). The fact that this was economically "irrational" (eg. one third of the landed soldiers' farms failed) shows that it was not for pragmatic reasons that the rural lifestyle was promoted, but for social idealist reasons - the creation of the arcadia of small family farms (Ibid:12). The government continued to encourage small holdings until the settlement of soldiers after World War Two (Eldred-Grigg 1982:182). Thus the belief that rural life was morally superior to life in the city continued, even when the social structure became increasingly urban.

Suburbanisation

Suburbanisation was the result of forcing the rural dream onto the urban reality (Fairburn 1975:9). The suburban movement, although existing in a limited way for centuries, increased in scale with the romantic movement and the increasingly bad conditions of the city (Mumford 1961:484). It had always been the prerogative of the wealthy land owners and aristocracy, but in Victorian times it became an increasingly middle-class response to the conditions of the city. It reflected the desire to create the home as a sanctuary in nature, a haven for women and children. Accessibility to a home in the suburbs increased with cheaper land prices at the city fringe, the growth of building societies, and improvement in city transport (Fairburn 1975:6).

The early subdivisions beyond the town belt especially in the poorer industrial areas of Sydenham and Linwood were often badly executed on poorly drained land. Even within the city, controls over the town boundaries by the municipal council were few. One of the rare occasions of intervention was when a builder put up a row of brick terrace houses in Durham Street in 1876. This was part of a larger scheme called Blackheath Place, but it was stopped because it was seen to be "reproducing the slums of England", and it was felt that many immigrants had fled England to get away from such areas. However, the authorities were blind to the new type of slums, of dingy housing, that were being created (Eldred-Grigg 1982:40; NZFUW 1977:19).

The State Housing Schemes of the early 20th century, while providing improved housing, reflected a middle-class set of values in its rejection of the possibility that housing could be provided for through flats or multi-unit dwellings. State aid for workers' housing consisted of shifting the working class family from the undesirable elements of the inner-city, to the domains of the respectable middle class in the suburbs (Fairburn 1989:261). Housing policy was based on the belief in single unit family housing as being in the best interests of the family because without it "there cannot be that parental control that is desirable and possible when a family

occupies its own home" (Fairburn 1975:17).

"Like the family farm, the state house was, in its initial conception, an affirmation of the New Zealand moral vision....the assumption was that the family was a self-contained soil-rooted institution" (Ibid:15).

The political belief, that had persisted throughout colonialism, was that widespread ownership of property lay at the heart of New Zealand's social and political stability (Fairburn 1989:260). The role of the first Labour Government was that it democratised the middle-class suburban lifestyle (Fairburn 1975:16). This response was close to the hearts of the early settlers - to create a society which was classless because everyone was middle class (Sinclair1988:102). The Just City and Arcadia were married in the suburbs of "shrubs and lawns and do-it-yourself" (Ibid:16).

The landholding aspirations of New Zealand were also a feature of other colonies such as Australia and the United States. Here too the outlet for land hunger resulted in the growth of suburbs. In Canterbury, with the landholders' bearing status and power, land was especially desired, and Christchurch with its English air became infatuated with the free-standing houses and flower beds of the English country estates (Eldred-Grigg 1982:39). Suburbanisation was also aided in Canterbury by the advances in transport - by river steamers on the Avon and Heathcote which enabled suburbs in Brighton and Opawa, and by railways and horse-driven omnibuses giving rise to the suburbs of Riccarton and Papanui (Ibid:39). Between 1914 and 1929 the city had doubled in size absorbing neighbouring boroughs and becoming "Greater Christchurch" (Ibid:103). By the 20th century the suburban movement had become an end in itself, as the obsession with property was met through a suburban section and a 'nice home'.

"The citizens of the 'Garden City', with their mortgages, bungalows and cars, no longer thought of cows and yeoman farming. Instead, they devoted themselves to the mowing of lawns and the

clipping of edges" (Eldred-Grigg 1982:109).

The town - country dichotomy continues

Despite the increasing urbanisation of the population, rural values still dominated the social, economic and political life of the region. Farmers were believed to be the backbone of the province and country as they earned most of the country's export earnings. The privileges offered them by the government reinforced the belief that rural life was morally superior to the city. For example, it was not until the 1945 franchise reform that city voters gained an equal voice to those in the countryside, or in 1944 that the vote at the local level was based on residence in a district rather than property ownership (Eldred-Grigg 1982:109;203). In literature also, until about 1935, the image of New Zealand was still largely based around the rural lifestyle (Jones 1989:190-195).

With the post-war urban drift New Zealand cities grew quickly, with Christchurch reaching 300 000 in 1970. The city became politically and economically dominant with the country becoming the client. Suburbanisation grew with the increased ownership of the car and by 1980 Christchurch covered about 14 000 ha with a diameter of 20km from Islington to New Brighton. The population density was about 20 people per hectare - the lowest of New Zealand's major cities (Eldred-Grigg 1982:175). In many ways the years following the war were the fulfilment of an older vision of New Zealand society, being still focussed on Britain. The New Zealand culture remained rural in orientation with male heroes such as Edmund Hillary and Barry Crump, and there was little encouragement of urban culture; the shops were closed all weekend, the pubs closed early, there were few coffee bars or restaurants, and the city was a place of commercial activity not social gathering (Phillips 1989:3-4).

Today the trends are different. Cities are becoming attractive places to live due to the

development of an urban culture. Bars and cafes, open all night and in the weekends, are bringing life into the city after 5pm. Inner-city living rather than suburban living is the growing trend, encouraged by the City Council through the Resource Management Act, which removes strict zoning practices.

At the same time there is also a growing "back to the countryside" movement. Surveys indicate that given a chance or opportunity, a great majority of urban dwellers (80%) would prefer to live in the country (Plawinski 1983:19). This movement began in the late 1970's, mainly by affluent suburbanites (Eldred-Grigg 1982:183), onto small rural blocks around the city. The number of smallholdings on or near the perimeter of Christchurch has almost doubled in the last decade. Most of these new owners are former urban dwellers, with many of them still working in the city (The Press 29/10/93).

This could be seen as an extension of the earlier suburban movement, led by the wealthy, desirous to escape from the grime and crime of the city (Pullen 1977:37-38). The move to rural living also seems to reflect a new ecological awareness (Ibid), and a desire to be self-sufficient. Many of the smallholding ventures are not economically successful, but the owners continue to stay on for the lifestyle values. A study recently commissioned by the Canterbury Regional Council found that it was the "peace, quietness and tranquility" which were the most important values for the smallholders (The Press 20/8/93).

In New Zealand then, both sides of the town/country dichotomy are being played out. The city has come to have an urban culture all of its own, distinct from what is happening in the rural scene, while with the help of the media, the countryside continues to supply images of the ideal romantic lifestyle. Although the preferencing of the rural over the urban sphere has diminished in New Zealand, it is not yet dead.

"Now, as then, we draw upon Arcadian allusions when characterising New Zealand as inherently pure and wholesome, ideal for outdoor living, and free of social problems of older societies (Fairburn 1989:268).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TOWN PLANNING INFLUENCE

The anti-urban views arising from the 19th century and the industrial city led, as described, to various reforms and alternative visions. The unhealthiness of urban life was accepted as fact. The major response to this by reformers was to explain the problems through the city's physical form and thereby devise solutions based on the physical environment (Buder 1990:211).

A popular belief of the 1900's, influenced by the environmental reform movement, was that society and its experts could improve communities so that they could fully meet all human needs. This would be achieved through the activity called 'town planning' (Buder 1990:101). The term acquired general use in the early 20th century with the campaign for municipal control over the city's development (Buder 1990:100). Modern town planning, as opposed to pre-industrial planning, emphasised a scientific approach relying on 'experts' to impose controls for the public good. A new discipline and university course on the subject was soon developed (Ibid:97). The International Conference on Town Planning in 1910 concluded that town planning was to be concerned with health, beauty, convenience, order and economy. Its goal was the greatest good for the greatest number. Whereas past planning had been done for and by elites, the modern planners were in contrast 'enlightened elites' (La Gory & Pipkin (1981:270).

Town planning theory and practice was initially strongly influenced by Howard's Garden City Movement, resulting in a tendency for town planning to advocate reform based on Howard's model. Although the Garden City associations were later dropped, the reformer role remained strong in town planning. Planners assumed their role was to impose rationality over the environment and attend to the public good (Buder 1990:107).

The tension between the utopian reformer role and the pragmatic professional role that emerged in the discipline of town planning was due to the convergence of four streams of development at the time: the humanitarian theme of a utopia of social harmony; the environmental reform movement and environmental determinism; the increasing role of the government; and, the need for coordination of the increasingly technical urban infrastructure (Buder 1990:209). The result was the belief that social harmony could be created through planning and social engineering (Ibid:211).

The importance placed on 'expert' knowledge and the belief that there were rational solutions to problems in planning, reflected the Enlightenment belief in Science, that has pervaded all aspects of society since the 16th century.¹² Part of the Enlightenment project, and an integral part of modernity, has been the philosophical doctrine of positivism. Positivism generates the epistemological position that knowledge is based on observable facts which are testable. This leads to the assumption that there is a universal truth that can be found through the objective methods of science. For example, it was hoped in the 19th century that the systematic study of human nature and human needs would provide, for the first time in history, a truly scientific basis for the reorganisation of society (Flew 1999:283). Democracy, or social equality, another doctrine of modernity, also influenced the practice of town planning through its belief in the need for institutions to protect the citizen from the full onslaught of the market (Turner 1990:9).

In town planning these beliefs led to the creation of grandiose schemes for redesigning the whole nature and structure of the urban form. Others followed in the nature of Howard's model cities, adapting his ideas, in some cases radically, to changing perceptions of society. Like Howard, they also had a significant influence on town planning ideas and practice. The most significant

¹² The Enlightenment period conventionally applies to the 18th century, also called 'The Age of Reason', but in terms of a critique of the Enlightenment belief system, it is cast as the period from about the 16th century to World War Two.

in terms of planning was the modernism movement of the 1920's and 1930's, led by the Bauhaus School in Germany and people such as Le Corbusier. These avant-garde architects from Europe rejected Howard's Garden City concerns, which were seen to reflect the tastes and values of the Edwardian era rather than the 'modern' post-war era (Buder 1990:149). However, they, like Howard, believed that suburbia had the virtues of neither city or country. Their plans for the ideal living environment was for a dense urban population surrounded by large areas of open space (Wurster 1963:94).

The movement of modernism constituted a response to the fundamental transformations in communication and transport in the late 19th century (Smart 1990:19). It was interested in ideas about form and function, and broke down and defined the basic functional elements of the urban sphere, finding that 'living' was the prime function (Benevolo 1980:866;871). 'Home' thus became the basic element in the city with the design of the ideal residential structure providing the basic building unit for town planning. The 'ideal' in terms of the rationalistic, functional and mechanical concerns of modernism was high rise, high density buildings in park-like settings (La Gory & Pipkin 1981:294). This approach, where the city was perceived as a 'machine for living' was as visionary and influential as Howard's Garden Cities. It provided the model for many post-war housing schemes which were upheld as the planning solution to London's congestion and sprawl (Buder 1990:149;154).

Another visionary that influenced planning, particularly in America, was Frank Lloyd Wright. In his book 'The Living City'(1958) he proposed a model that was the antithesis of the European modernists, and reflected the most distinctively American contribution to town planning. His hypothetical city 'Broadacre' was aimed at preserving rural lifestyles and social structures through a low density city of semiagrarian lifestyle made possible through the universal ownership of the automobile. Although not as persuasive as Corbusier's ideas, Wright's low

density city (optimal density being about one person per acre) did influence United States planners in the 1950's and 1960's. The expression of Wright's vision can best be seen in the city of Los Angeles which as a result of low density housing now spreads nearly 100 miles across (Hall 1987:67;269).

Modern planning was strongly influenced by the concept of environmental determinism, a common ideology at the turn of the century when town planning was emerging as a discipline. Environmental determinism was a belief system based on the assumption that the physical environment was the major influence on human behaviour. Thus the very ideology of planning rested on the idea that by manipulating the physical environment, social patterns and experiences could be controlled (La Gory & Pipkin 1981:216).

Another tendency of planning that emerged with the discipline, and one which still pervades today, is that planning is a rational and technical exercise for dealing with urban problems. This assumption is based on the concepts of positivism mentioned earlier: that problems can be analysed objectively using mathematical tools and that these are capable of producing generalised principles, from which events can be predicted and controlled (Reinharz 1983:168). Thus by using the right formula the solution can be found. From this basis both the 'problem' and the 'solution' were seen as objective and unquestionable. As Le Corbusier stated:

"My object was...by constructing a theoretically water-tight formula to arrive at the fundamental principles of modern town planning...We must have some rule of conduct. We must have fundamental principles for modern town planning" (from 'The City of Tomorrow' quoted in White 1988).

The method used to achieve this, at least until the 1960's was simple: survey-analyse-plan, with a resulting detailed blueprint for the future (Hall 1987:12). Whyte writing in 1968 commented that "planners faith in grand designs is stronger than ever". The trend to plan towards the year 2000 (ie.20-30 years) was an expression of positivism in its implicit theory that humans are in

control of destiny (Whyte 1968:5;146).

The more recent planning schemes, even if 'grand', were a lot less deterministic than the earlier planning designs. This was due to a change in methodology in planning practice. Prior to 1960 urban planning was concerned with detail, and precision with a clear vision for how things were to be. With the rise of computers and the 'systems analysis' methodology, more complex methods for planning were developed. This approach was iterative, with a focus on the process of problem-solving rather than on a distinct end state. The process involved an explicit identification of goals, the continuous gathering of information, projection and simulation of alternatives, evaluation, choice and continuous monitoring (Hall 1987:12).

The systems-analysis approach to town planning in the 1960's reflected a disillusionment with trying to shape desirable social values through architecture and design, and instead recognised the complexities of problems.¹³ For example, most social scientists in the past had seen high densities as unnatural and conflicting with biological needs. To prove their theories they pointed to social pathologies such as delinquency to show that high densities were negative. By assuming that there was a universally biological innate response to density they ignored cultural influence on attitudes towards living density and personal space and confused high density with the problem of overcrowding (La Gory 1981:21). Their theories, based on physical determinism, neglected to analyse other variables such as social and economic factors that greatly contribute to social pathologies (La Gory & Pipkin 1981:223). Thus by clearing row housing slums in Britain and replacing them with new modern high rise housing they made the situation worse, as abandoned housing estates now show.

¹³ In the conservative political climate of the 1980's, with its emphasis on the individual, the rejection of the physical determinism argument has led to responses over social reform such as 'you can take people out of the slums but you can't take the slum out of people' (Buder 1990:205).

Postmodernism of resistance; postmodernism of reaction

In more recent years, planning has come under the influence of postmodernism, which presents a challenge to the assumptions of modernism, and to the intervention and controlling aspect of planning. Postmodernism first came to prominence in the 1960's in the area of literary criticism (Smart 1990:22), but it has not been until the last decade that there has been any significant interest in postmodernism in the social sciences (Turner 1990:2).

A 'postmodernism of resistance' challenges the grand narratives of modernism that are based on the universalising theories of truth, and is sceptical of separate fields of experts who are placed further up the hierarchy in knowing these truths (Ibid:5). It challenges the existence of an 'objective' truth and looks instead to subjective realities for understanding society. This leads to a focus on 'difference', and attention to historical and cultural contexts.

Applied to the planning scene, this implies that problem definitions and solutions are not objective but are value-laden. An awareness that class and cultural differences influence perceptions and experiences of the environment (gender experiences are still generally neglected as being significant) led to a questioning of the 'desirable social values' that planners are supposed to be planning towards (Buder 1990:206). For example, opposition to the 'urban renewal' scheme in the poorer parts of Christchurch showed that many working class people were being 'improved' against their will (Eldred-Grigg 1980:179). The 'top-down' approach with the 'experts' planning for people was being questioned.

Allowing for difference and complexity has become the new challenge in planning. One result of this is that planners no longer devise plans as 'objective' experts, but have to actively encourage public participation in order to incorporate other values. In a world where no view is objective this has been an important way in which other values and perspectives get an input

into the way our cities and regions are planned.

It needs to be noted, however, that the theory and method for successful and representative public participation is still developing. There is a feeling of frustration at the lack of ability to participate in an authentic way in local planning. This is due in part to the reliance on technical expertise, jargon, concepts and excessive by-laws in planning, which means the authority for making landscapes remains in the hands of a small group of professionals. This 'hyper-planning' is a consequence of using ever-increasing rational techniques for the organisation of human activities. Hyper-planning ensures "nothing ever untoward happens", which while good in terms of safety and efficiency, means that opportunities for communities to become involved in making and maintaining the places in which they live is reduced (Relph 1981:87-104).

Another recent trend that fundamentally affects planning, is the new market philosophies of the 1980's. Based on Adam Smith's theory, government intervention is again being challenged as it was in the 19th century. It is argued that competition leads to greater economic efficiency and any barriers to this will subsequently reduce efficient delivery of goods and services. Thus the role of planning, which is by nature interventionist and controlling, is being questioned and reassessed.

This is seen by some to also be a facet of postmodernism. The postmodernism of resistance described above seeks to deconstruct modernism and resist the status quo, while postmodernism that is a passive accommodation of the market is reactionary in that it serves to reinforce the logic of consumer capitalism (Smart 1990:24-25; Bourassa 1991:13).

While the questioning of the extent of planning law brought about through the free-market approach may help create the opportunity for more individual expression in the landscape, there

is the danger that it will only increase the opportunities for those who already have power and resources.

However, as planning initially originated as a response to the failure of the market to create an orderly and just social environment, and through experience over the years, it is acknowledged that there is some need for intervention. It is the extent and rationale of these regulations that is currently being challenged in the new social climate.

The Christchurch Greenbelt Revisited under the Resource Management Act

The Christchurch greenbelt, established in the 1950's by British influenced planners, is under examination as to its relevance to Christchurch in the 1990's. Created at a time before planning was challenged as a value-laden practice, and when there was little justification needed for regulatory controls, the re-examination of the greenbelt policy is now appropriate. The new planning climate described briefly above, with its questioning of regulatory controls, and its recognition of multiple viewpoints and the desire to incorporate these through the process of public participation, is epitomised by the Resource Management Act 1991, in terms of both the postmodernism of resistance and of reaction mentioned above.

As a result of the free market philosophy promoted by the fourth Labour Government in 1984, there has been a questioning of the tight planning controls that exist in the regional and district schemes (Hinman 1988:4). The Resource Management Act (RMA)(1991) which replaces the Town and Country Planning Act 1977, is a reflection of the changing perspective in terms of planning.

The purpose of the RMA is significantly different from the TCPA, having its focus as the *...sustainable management of natural and physical resources* (s.5). This purpose almost

exclusively emphasises matters which relate to the natural environment rather than the social environment, with the exception of principles associated with the protection of Maori culture and traditions, the Treaty of Waitangi, and the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values (Perkins et al 1993:27). There is little guidance for urban planners (Trevena 1990:15). Thus the complexities of the issues in the urban sphere have "become invisible, except in a functional economic sense" (Perkins et al 1993:25).

The Resource Management Act is far less prescriptive than the Town and Country Planning Act. With its objective of sustainability and focus on outcomes rather than activities it has the ability to be far more permissive than past legislation. In this respect there is greater onus on the implementers at the regional and district levels than before. For example, the Act does not specify that sporadic subdivision into rural areas be prevented nor that agricultural land should be preserved, as did the TCPA (DeLuca 1991:8). It does not try to strategically plan activities by imposing controls, but rather sets limits or performance standards and lets people get on within them (pers.comm. Allan Shepherd 1993). There is no opportunity for preparing a Regional Plan similar to the Regional Planning Scheme 1985 with its proactive 'grand scheme' growth strategy (pers.comm. Max Barber 1993).

Regional and district plans¹⁴ required under the RMA have to state justifications for any policies and rules within their plans. Under the RMA there is scope for the use of various tools for implementing policies, such as the potential to use economic instruments. Zoning could also be used but it would have to be justifiable under the sustainability criteria of the RMA (pers.comm. Max Barber 1993).

¹⁴ Regional Plans and District Plans will replace the Regional and District Schemes required under the TCPA.

Public participation, although not new in policy making, did receive particular attention in the Resource Management Law Reform process. It has subsequently become an important aspect in the formulation of Regional Policy Statements and District Plans, as policies that reflect "the values and aspirations of the whole community..." (Canterbury Regional Council 1993:15).

What is the future of the greenbelt under the Resource Management Act? At present under the Regional Planning Scheme 1985 the greenbelt is a zone around Christchurch imposed as a method to meet certain planning objectives (see appendix two). Under the RMA that greenbelt zone would need to be justified.

"A case for a green belt will have to be very carefully argued and based on the principles of the act rather than on the controlling approach" (Chris Kerr, The Press: 5/2/93).

Chris Kerr raises the issue of whether the RMA legislation is sufficient to ensure the protection of the greenbelt. Under the authority of the Planning Tribunal reasons for the greenbelt will need to be articulated according to the language of the RMA (pers.comm. Chris Kerr 1993). Within the greenbelt there are areas which could be retained using the new environmental standards of the RMA, such as protection of quality growing soils. However the result of using such reasons leads to a tendency for greenbelt advocates to rush around trying to justify the greenbelt concept according to old rationales without analysing the purpose of the greenbelt in the contemporary situation.

The effect of this would be an ad hoc protection, with bits here and there saved for different reasons. Some parts would be justified according to soil quality standards, others for conservation reasons, other parts for recreation etc. By doing this planners seem guilty of protecting the greenbelt more for its own sake, without being honest about the reasons why they want to save it (pers.comm. Allan Shepherd). In this way old, perhaps inappropriate policies, such as the greenbelt, will be retained without a chance to really critically analyse their role and

purpose.

The greenbelt could be critiqued and rejected outright as a modernist concept that encapsulates top-down control and regulation. The term itself suggests confinement and restriction. It thus seems outdated and inappropriate in the new climate of participatory planning. The following two chapters examine closer the meaning of the greenbelt concept and term, showing that the above critique is not as clear cut as it might appear.

CHAPTER SIX

GREENBELT AS POLICY INSTRUMENT - GREENBELT AS

ICON

"It sounds as though Green Belts are all things to all men (sic). That makes them seem an elusive, even devious device. But in fact it is surely a critical element of their attraction, and the key to understanding the longevity and popularity of the concept (Horsman 1988 quoted in Herington 1990).

The policy of containment - a negative role for the greenbelt

Whether high density or low density, perspectives on the ideal city all conform to the same underlying concept - that settlement should be an independent spatial unit separable from others of its kind through an area of land that is not settled - a greenbelt that maintains the distinct separation of land that is urbanised from land that is not (Webber 1963:33-34). Therefore suburbia that blurs this distinction is perceived negatively as urban sprawl, scatteration, subtopia, and 'cancerous growth'(Ibid:24).

The original objective for the greenbelt policy in Britain was to contain large cities to stop them from sprawling or merging with other settlements (Herington 1990:9). The Christchurch greenbelt also had urban containment as its main objective (Barber 1991:3). Of the ten objectives listed in the 1985 Regional Policy Statement four specifically relate to the nature of settlement and the distinction between rural and urban.

In Howard's Garden City model the greenbelt had a positive function as well as its 'stopper' role. Food production and recreational needs were also primary purposes of the greenbelt (Herington 1990:11). However, the British greenbelt policy, despite the 1938 Greenbelt Act which emphasised the role of the Greenbelt for recreation and amenity, has in practice meant that the greenbelt is essentially for containment. The quality of the environment or the greenbelt's

landscape and amenity values have not been an essential part of the official greenbelt policy (Herington 1990:19). Likewise recreation has been a secondary objective of government policy, although there have been times when the recreational use value has been strong (Ibid:20). However, according to the House of Commons Environment Committee (1984) greenbelts were never intended to be negative 'stoppers' of urban growth but rather to have a positive planning role - that of open space with an assurance against development to shape urban areas on a regional scale (Ibid:41).

Despite the successfulness of the greenbelt policy in stopping development, there has been continuing pressure from developers for land in the greenbelt. This is true not only in England, but also in Christchurch (see appendix three). The results of studies in England show that greater pressure existed for development in the Greenbelt than in similar land that was not subject to the greenbelt policy (Herington 1990:21). In Christchurch, development proposals concerning land in the greenbelt continue to be put to the Regional Council for approval and cases continue to be fought through the Planning Tribunal. In appeals to the Planning Tribunal in May 1988 to change the greenbelt zoning to allow for development, the Tribunal overruled five out of six appeals as they were seen to undermine the containment role of the greenbelt. The appellants' arguments for development were interesting in that they mainly focused on the secondary justifications of the greenbelt - that the land was not appropriate for agriculture, or that it did not provide amenity values (Planning Tribunal 1988). In Britain as well, where the value of the greenbelt is more to do with amenity values rather than agriculture, developers emphasise that the greenbelt does not of itself protect the quality of the landscape. They draw a distinction between the positive and negative parts of the greenbelt, suggesting that the 'brown belt', of degraded landscape would have higher amenity values if it was redeveloped (Herington 1990:28).

These continuing challenges to the greenbelt mean that there needs to be compelling reasons for

the greenbelts existence if the policy is not to be undermined. This is especially true in the Christchurch case at present, where all policies in the Regional Policy document need to be justified in relation to the Resource Management Act. 'Grand planning schemes', such as the 1985 Settlement Policy under which the greenbelt policy rests, will no longer be possible (pers.comm. Max Barber 1993). The problem is that open space, such as the greenbelt has been seen by the central government in Britain and the Regional Council in Christchurch, to be of benefit, not for what it provides, but for what it prevents. This main reason for the greenbelt, for metropolitan structuring, does not appeal greatly to the uninformed (Whyte 1968:135). It is debatable how far the city would have spread if there had been no greenbelt policy, but at some stage there would have had to be a limit imposed by the local authority to stop the spread of the city, and so the greenbelt in this respect could be perceived as a positive policy (pers.comm. Val Kirby 1993).

In this respect the secondary objectives of sustaining natural resources for agriculture and visual amenity play an important role in justifying the greenbelt (Whyte 1968:143) - that is, the greenbelt's use values rather than its containment values. However, as the greenbelt is essentially a planning zone, with a blanket type approach, there will be areas within the greenbelt that do not have these values - many parts may not be visually scenic (especially if factory farming techniques are used) or contain high quality soil resources. In other words the greenbelt does not provide for these values efficiently. As Whyte comments

"The trouble with the generalised greenbelt approach is that it asks for too much land without justifying it" (Ibid:12).

Consequently, under the Resource Management Act there is a rush to find specific reasons for preserving each part of the greenbelt, so that it can be justified according to the sustainability

criteria of the Act.

The use of the greenbelt - filling the vacuum

In terms of secondary objectives London's greenbelt has always included the provision of public access to the open countryside for recreation and other outdoor leisure activities (Herington 1990:9). The greenbelt designed by Unwin in the 1930's emphasised recreational and amenity purposes that were within easy reach of the urban population (Whyte 1968:153). The recreational aspect of the greenbelt in London was also helped by the purchasing of large tracts of land by the local authorities, and the existence of Commons, which were already established. However, a major constraint to increasing the recreational provisions of the greenbelts in England is that most of the land is in private ownership and most owners see that there is little value for them in investing in recreational facilities. There is little public money for developing facilities, as well as the realisation that only certain groups use the greenbelt for recreation. Difficulties such as long travel times, infrequent public transport, and cost, makes the greenbelt's recreational facilities relatively unavailable to many in London (Herington 1990:20).

As for the amenity values of the greenbelt, this is an essential aspect of Britain's greenbelts. For example, the Council for the Protection of Rural England (of which Abercrombie was an influential member in the past), sees the Greenbelt as the cornerstone of the defense of 'countryside' and the rural idyll (Herington 1990:29). The Greenbelt policy as such, however, does not include specific provisions for its amenity values, nor for the improvement of the belts' appearance - the quality of the landscape is said not to be a material factor in the continued protection of the greenbelt (Ibid:19).

The secondary objectives of the Christchurch greenbelt have been mainly concerned with the protection of land for agricultural and horticultural purposes, as Christchurch was developed on

old flood plains which by nature have generally good quality soils. The focus on protection of agricultural resources is due to New Zealand's history as a primary producing country, with land as its major resource. It can also be traced to the rural tendencies of New Zealand culture which has had a strong influence on many land use policies. Consequently, most recent debates about the greenbelt have been concerned with the increase in the number of small holdings in the greenbelt, and the changing nature of agriculture in New Zealand.

The recreational objectives of the greenbelt have not been strong in Christchurch. There are several probable reasons for this. Firstly, nearly all of the greenbelt is in private hands. Although this is true for much of London's greenbelt, the public is entitled access to the countryside along various tracks. This right of access is kept open, through various 'ramblers' clubs who walk the tracks at least yearly (this is a requirement for access to be continued)(pers.comm. Graeham Densem 1993). New Zealand, in contrast, has a stronger private property ideology and this natural right of access does not exist.¹⁵

The nature of New Zealand agriculture with its extensive fencing also enhances the private property concept, in contrast to a number of countries in Europe where you can walk anywhere as long as you don't damage the crops (The Press 5/2/93). An exception to this lack of access to private land is the 'Queens Chain', a concept originating at the time of colonisation through the decree of Queen Victoria who said that all people in the new colony should have free access to the waterways. Thus along most rivers, lakes and coast there is currently between 3-20 metres of public land which everyone has rights of access to (Public Access New Zealand 1993).

¹⁵ Many farms however do have 'paper roads'. These are publicly owned roads, as are most roads in New Zealand, which are one chain wide. Although these are only roads on paper (that is they have not been developed as roads by the government as yet) in theory the public does have a right to use these roads. This public access is legal under the common law inherited from Britain which says that everyone has right of passage along public roads (Public Access New Zealand 1993).

Unlike Britain, New Zealand, since colonisation, has not had a long history of Commons or land that has been owned and looked after by the community. With the establishment of the Native Land Court in 1865, and the subsequent individualisation of communally owned Maori land, any land that was not held privately was owned by the Crown, as Crown Lands. These lands are not the same as Commons, as they are held and managed by the central Government (Snyder 1990:30). There was a promotion for Commons provision in New Zealand during last century but it was not thought necessary, as Christchurch had Hagley Park while Dunedin and Wellington had their town belts. This proliferation of parks was partly a response to the strong private property ethic in New Zealand (pers.comm.Lynne Lochhead 1993). To an extent the identification with the countryside in New Zealand has been suppressed by New Zealanders insistence on private property rights. Due to this the greenbelt does not represent as strong an icon of the countryside as it does in Britain (pers.comm.Val Kirby 1993).

Another reason why the greenbelt is not an area generally promoted on recreational grounds may be due to the fact that the need is not as great as in England. The establishment of Christchurch at a time when open space issues were considered essential in cities, meant that Christchurch was well provided for in terms of parks. In particular, Hagley Park and the Botanical Gardens in the centre of the city provide for many recreational needs. There is also a requirement for a certain amount of land to be set aside when new subdivisions are built, which means there is also an abundance of suburban parks throughout the city. Public access to the Port Hills, established through the work of Harry Ell at the turn of the century, also provides a substantial area for recreation that is accessible to the people of Christchurch. Ell's efforts were a direct response to the threat of road closing which would mean loss of public access, and his deep belief "that the first right of a citizen was to have the privilege of walking his(sic) own land without barrier or hindrance" (Oakley 1960:33). The Port Hills is officially part of the greenbelt according to the 1985 planning map, and so in some ways one could argue that the greenbelt does have a

strong recreational role. The reserves, farm parks and covenant areas are extremely popular with the Christchurch community, with more than 800 000 recreational visits made yearly. However, these areas only amount to about 1500 hectares - 11% of the Port Hills (Rooney 1993).

As well as having easy access to the Port Hills (including public transport to the Sign of the Takahe), people in Christchurch, and in New Zealand generally, can get outside the city boundary fairly easily (Auckland may be an exception with its large population and land area). For the people of Christchurch the mountains are only a couple of hours away by car, and these provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities, as do the braided rivers of the plains.

Although the greenbelt does have areas for recreation, the greenbelt per se does not perform a local need in terms of recreation. The greenbelt is purely incidental to the recreational functions that the Port Hills, Groyne and McLeans Island provide (pers.comm. Kirby 1993).

What values does the greenbelt embrace as its own? or the greenbelt becomes cultural icon

The greenbelt and cultural identity

"The high political profile and strong public favour enjoyed by greenbelts are based partly on idealised images of rural life and landscape. Greenbelts are seen as defences for these threatened values, and this has come to be regarded as their primary purpose. In fact, protection of the countryside in this way is seen as an end in itself, regardless of any contrary intention stated in government legislation" (Herington 1990:37).

The fact that there is a powerful lobby called the 'Council for the Protection of Rural England' as well as many local groups and various environment groups that are opposed to any kind of development in the countryside is an indicator of how important the countryside is to the cultural identity of the British. New Zealand's environmental lobby on the other hand, is concerned with

the protection of Aotearoa's native flora and fauna rather than the rural countryside which is an 'exotic' or introduced feature in our landscape. One could conclude from this that the pastoral myth in New Zealand is not as strong or essential to New Zealand identity as the myth of the bush or the mountains or the coast - the icons of wilderness. However, it may not be as clear cut as this. For example the 'The Urban Ecology Group', consisting of various consultants, including Landcare, support the creation of a policy in Christchurch for the regeneration of native species to enhance their presence in the city. There is opposition to this idea, as many people value the Christchurch landscape for its English character which distinguishes it from the other major cities (pers.comm. Val Kirby 1993). It could be said that Christchurch's identity is based on this 'exotic' landscape and thus the promotion of natives over exotics will gradually change the identity of Christchurch, perhaps taking away its uniqueness. For example, the predominantly pastoral landscape of the Port Hills in combination with its other features gives them a distinctive quality with which the people of Christchurch identify. To revegetate Banks Peninsula in native bush would significantly alter the character of the Christchurch landscape, and perhaps upset the community's sense of identity and place. In this way the pastoral and the indigenous myths may not be mutually exclusive in terms of what people value.

However, the vastly different physical environments of Britain and New Zealand do have a significant part to play in cultural identity. Britain, with its ancient history of human occupation has a vastly modified natural environment which is evident in its countryside landscape. The brooks and meadows of which praises are sung in literature, are the images we associate with Britain's rural landscape, and this has become an essential aspect of 'Englishness'. It is for this reason that the lobby for the protection of the countryside is so strong and why developers complain that the greenbelt has "come to enjoy a political sanctity similar to that of the national parks", even if factory farms and silos are the reality (Adam Smith Institute 1988 quoted in Herington 1990:28).

The greenbelt in New Zealand, however, sits a little uneasily in a landscape which is far different from the one for which it was designed. To begin with, the open space values the greenbelt is designed to protect seem a bit irrelevant in a country with a vast land resource (pers.comm. Val Kirby 1993). The pastoral landscape is not an essential part of New Zealand's cultural identity as it is in Britain. New Zealand literature, after the obsession with the colonial dream of being the Britain of the South waned, did not revere the 'miles of sun-kissed plain/Summer-clad with budding grain'. Instead it rebelled against this Pastoral Paradise and its "simplistic and arrogant imposition of a European dream on a South Pacific landscape" (Jones 1989:196). This rejection can be seen in the writings of authors such as Frank Sargeson, Robin Hyde, and Denis Glover - for example in Denis Glover's poem "The Magpies" where the idealised rural idyll of England is challenged by the realities of Tom and Elizabeth's failed farm (Jones 1989:197). In the same way, art searched for a distinctively New Zealand identity through the landscape which was unique to this country

"... the richness and mystery of the virgin bush; the almost unexplored wonder and weird beauty of the thermal regions; the mighty snow-clad mountains; rivers and lakes of almost unlimited variation and character; and many other aspects of the country, which, at times is austere beautiful rather than charming" (Ronald Hipkins 1934 in Jones 1989:215).

The greenbelt - distinguishing the rural from the urban

If the greenbelt is not an essential part of New Zealand culture and identity as it is in Britain, why does any threat to the Christchurch greenbelt meet with such passionate opposition? The formation of the Greenbelt Action Group (now the Greenbelt Protection Society Incorporated) in 1991, and the fact that the retention of the greenbelt was a major local election issue in 1992 in all four district councils affected by it (Waimakariri, Selwyn, Banks Peninsula and Christchurch City), show that there is a strong public feeling surrounding the issue of the greenbelt. Similarly, there has been an enormous response to recent proposals to rezone land from greenbelt to residential in the Northwest part of the city (410 submissions) and to golf course and resort development at the Groynes (168 submissions - 104 opposed), as well as strong

support for the greenbelt in the media through editorials and letters to the editor (see appendix four). This concern, which comes from throughout the city (pers.comm. Allan Shepherd 1993), seems to indicate that the Christchurch greenbelt is significant for the people of Christchurch.

It is clear that the greenbelt concept has become more than a simple planning policy for the Christchurch community. This leads to the key question of what is it that the urban community needs, wants, likes, or demands from the Christchurch greenbelt policy?

Whyte (1968) emphasises the aesthetics of open spaces such as the greenbelt, as he believes this is the main motivating force for supporters¹⁶. Similarly, Allan Shepherd, a policy analyst for the Ministry for the Environment, believes that the real issue behind the greenbelt for the urban population is its amenity values (pers.comm. 1993). Amenity is seen to be an important objective in planning because it is believed that a quality environment ensures the well-being of society (Briggs & Craig 1992:3).

Amenity is defined in the Resource Management Act as

"...those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence and cultural and recreational attributes"
(RMA 1991:8).

The greenbelt is favoured by people because it contributes to the character of Christchurch. It

¹⁶ Despite this amenity value there is little call for improvement of amenity values in the greenbelt. Although in Britain there are some groups that are concerned with the conservation and management of the land, most have a narrower focus of just stopping development in order to save the countryside from urban spread per se. This is why a blanket approach to saving the countryside, such as the greenbelt policy is favoured. Negative aspects of the greenbelt are ignored in light of the dominant image of the greenbelt being a "band of rustic tranquillity". Open space, in whatever form, is promoted as having inherent value (Herington 1990:29-30).

does this by helping to distinguish the urban from the rural.

"By knowing what is urban, we know what is rural, and vice versa. The more extreme the distinctions, and contrast between them, the greater the definition and recognition of what is the countryside and what is the City" (Briggs & Craig 1992:4).

The significance of the greenbelt policy is that it is a mechanism for retaining the division between the rural and the urban landscape. The emotive feelings that surround its retention also serve to show that it has a symbolic value in retaining this distinction. Behind the ideal city form with its rejection of 'sprawling suburbs' are

"the more fundamental beliefs that urban and rural comprise a dualism that should be clearly expressed in the physical and spatial form of the city..." (Webber 1963:34).

The draft Regional Policy Statement's section on 'Settlement and the Built Environment' makes this role of the greenbelt policy more apparent than did the Town and Country Planning Act.¹⁷

"This issue [the greenbelt] largely reflects a value on open space surrounding urban areas that transcends the recreational or landscape or other resource value. This value arises from the proximity of open countryside to people and communities" (CRC 1993:153).

This signifies a move towards acknowledging the amenity values that the greenbelt represents to many people. However, there was concern expressed over the expression 'open space', as the countryside is not synonymous with the term "open". In fact the contrast between the open and the enclosed is a characteristic typical of the rural. Shelter belts, which are increasingly common in the greenbelt due to increased horticultural production, do not comply with the provision of

¹⁷ Under the RMA the Regional Policy Statement provides an overall view of the different but interrelated areas of resource management. Rules and other methods for implementing the policies are contained in the regional and district plans. The plans must not be inconsistent with the Regional Policy Statement. Regional plans are optional for the regional council, and will only be prepared if it is deemed necessary. However, district plans prepared by the City and District Councils are compulsory (CRC 1993:2).

open space values but actually give a high degree of confinement (Briggs & Craig 1992:17). Thus it is not really open space that distinguishes between the rural and the urban, but the characteristics of the rural.¹⁸

The definition of the significance of the greenbelt in the Draft Regional Policy Statement is interesting in that it is defined in relation to the urban community. The strong value that has been placed on the greenbelt policy by the Christchurch public could be seen as an issue of urban sustainability, as it represents values which are important to the urban community (pers.comm. Allan Shepherd 1993).

The more pragmatic issues of the 1985 Greenbelt policy are no longer part of the justification for a greenbelt under the Resource Management Act - those concerns are dealt with specifically as issues of sustainability of natural and physical resources. These sustainability issues can best be met through other planning tools such as performance standards and economic instruments. As a zone, the greenbelt's value is to the urban community.

Although the issue of the greenbelt is in effect urban containment, the image conjured by the word 'greenbelt' is not a negative image of stopping development. It is rather a positive image of open space, greenness and countryside - urban containment is merely the tool in which the real objective, of maintaining a countryside that is not marred by the urban sphere, is realised. In this way Kirby believes that the greenbelt symbolises the system of values that says 'green unbuilt areas are good' (pers.comm. 1993). Thus the inherent need for open space that has been present since the town became a city is realised through the greenbelt policy. It therefore appears that the long standing dichotomy between the town and the country remains an important icon of our

¹⁸ Briggs and Craig identify typically rural characteristics: primary economy, buildings surrounded by space, exposure, organic, unsophisticated, animal territory, passive - slow change, homogeneity - simple with little variety, expansiveness - sparse, extensive and open (1992:6).

culture. The greenbelt policy has become the symbol of this distinction, as is evident in the following excerpts about the greenbelt from letters to the editor in the Christchurch Press.

"Our rural boundaries have a pleasant and healthy impact on us all... (The Press 23/4/93).

"...In crowded Britain one good feature is the way in which towns end abruptly and green countryside begins..." (The Press 23/4/93).

"Creeping urbanisation is a disease which requires a strong remedy..." (The Press 4/1/93).

CHAPTER SEVEN

NEW MEANINGS FOR THE GREENBELT IN THE 1990's

The greenbelt was introduced in Christchurch in the social context of the 1950's, which is significantly different to where we find ourselves today. The rural-urban shift, full employment, the growth of the suburbs and the culture of the nuclear family in their 'quarter-acre pavlova paradise' and the lingering influence of the rural culture are not trends so evident today. Rather there is inner city redevelopment, changing family structures with fewer nuclear families, structural unemployment, a bi-cultural and multi-cultural awareness, and a culture that is strongly urban and which is more influenced by America than Britain (Phillips 1989:4).

Homogeneity and Place

The changes that have occurred in recent decades in New Zealand are part of trends that are happening throughout the world. These changes have occurred for many reasons, including the globalisation of the media, and the economy of multinationals. These two in particular have helped form what could be termed a global culture: universal food, homogenized sound, consumer entertainment and corporate language (Hough 1990:87).

Hough states that this homogenising fate has also affected the landscape. Prior to the industrial revolution settlements were necessarily distinct, due to limitations imposed by land, climate, building materials, and social and historic forces unique to each place (Ibid:85). In the modern world these limitations are no longer significant, and so towns and cities tend to be more alike, resulting in a city's character being drawn not from its buildings, but from its regional surrounds. "From within looking out, or from outside looking in, one had no question about one's whereabouts" (Ibid:87). However, the expansion onto the surrounding countryside, brought about through post-war growth of cities, threatens the distinctiveness of urban centres, as the regional

features are subsumed under suburbia (Ibid:88).

"Without the Port Hills as a natural backdrop, Christchurch will become just another urban estate" (letter to the editor *The Press* 2/7/93).

A result of the homogenising effects of modern culture is the loss of identity. The reaction is to assert this identity and search for things that are unique to it (pers.comm. Andrew Craig 1993). For example, Bertrand Russell on his travels around America, noted that the greater the uniformity existing between places, the more eager was the search for difference to mitigate it (1948:188).

"Every place wishes to have a reason for local pride, and therefore cherishes whatever is distinctive in the way of geography or history or tradition (Ibid:188).

The discovery or rediscovery of place is part of the search for new meanings in the "meaningless complexity of modern life", according to Berdoulay 1989 (quoted in Whittle 1993). Reinforcing differences between areas is a way in which people can maintain their identity and sense of place¹⁹. Thus for Christchurch, enhancing the Port Hills distinctiveness is one way in which the city's identity is maintained (pers.comm. Andrew Craig 1993). The greenbelt policy, by keeping suburban sprawl at bay, has been an important element in retaining a distinctive regional setting and 'sense of place' for Christchurch city.

¹⁹ The Resource Management Act does this to an extent in its provision for the enhancement of New Zealand's unique landscape through protecting indigenous flora and fauna (S.6(c)).

Environmentalism

Environmentalism as a progressive movement in contemporary western society is another social aspect that was not part of mainstream culture when the greenbelt was introduced. Attitudes towards the environment have changed, with an awareness that humans are part of a fragile biosphere. This value change has often been referred to as post-materialism. Environmentalism, although a new phenomenon in some respects, has its roots in history, for example, it has links to Romanticism and the open space movement. With the increased secularisation of western society, environmentalism could be seen as a quasi-religious or non-religious meaning complex that Featherstone (1991) suggests has taken the place of institutional religion (Ibid:112). For example, nature programmes have replaced religious programmes on television, providing a sense that there is another realm outside our fast urban lifestyle, a place of 'purity', untouched by human hand. For many the natural environment provides a spiritual aspect in life, and consequently any threat to this is met with hostility.

The greenbelt, although not a remarkable natural environment, does, however, represent an environment that is perceived as more 'natural' than the built environment. It is a means for protecting the value system that ascribes virtue to country settings while evaluating cities negatively (Squire 1993). Saving the greenbelt, then, is perceived as saving the natural environment from the hands of the developer, the dollar, and the human built form. The greenbelt ensures that escape from the city is possible, that the countryside's sights and smells are accessible, and that spiritual feelings for the environment can be rekindled. In this respect the greenbelt is perceived as being important as an end in itself.

Acknowledging intangible values in the world of 'rationality'

The need for open or rural space is felt as strongly as it was in Ebenezer Howard's day, but the justification is less explicit. At the heart of peoples' reasoning for the greenbelt, (its retention

of good quality soils, saving the need for extension of services etc) is the instinctive feeling that the countryside is inherently 'good'. A century ago it was rationalised through environmental determinist theories, but as these are no longer satisfactory we have moved to justifying the greenbelt on the basis of sustaining resources.

By doing this we have neglected to acknowledge that there are important, less tangible values tied up in the greenbelt concept.

It is questionable whether the greenbelt as an "important icon of our culture" will be able to be defended on this basis under legislation. Although the planning scene has changed in wake of the recognition that it is not a value-free exercise, the issue is more complex than just allowing for more views and perspectives to be taken into account. The problem lies at a deeper level in the issue of epistemology, or the theory of knowledge.

At present institutions operate according to the dominant scientific worldview. This paradigm, which came to prominence in the Enlightenment, is based on the dominance of mind over matter, reason over emotion, and object over subject. This approach to knowledge recognises values that can be quantified or scientifically proven while undermining those that cannot. To incorporate intangible values requires transforming them into quantifiable or 'rational' items.²⁰

"the result is often a frantic search for rational reasons for attaching aesthetic, recreational, scientific or cultural value to that part of nature so that the non-resource can be transformed into a resource " (Scott 1986:177 quoted in Kilvington 1993).

²⁰ Resource economics attempts to quantify 'non-market' values, such as aesthetic values, through the hedonic price method, the travel cost method and the contingent valuation method. These methods attempt to evaluate what people are 'willing to pay' for the non-market good. Thus an attempt is made to bring existence values (black robins), vicarious use values (the benefit of knowing something is there), direct use values (climbing a mountain) and bequest values (availability for future generations), into the arena of quantification in order for decisions to be made. As such it only addresses instrumental values, ignoring the existence of intrinsic values.

As identified by Carlin (1993) the legal process operates according to this Western scientific approach to knowledge. The definition of the problem, and the range of possible options and solutions are tightly bound to this dominant social ideology. The result is that certain areas of knowledge are disregarded as "unscientific". Intangible values, such as those associated with 'place'²¹, are difficult to articulate in a courtroom full of soil and water experts. This leads proponents of the greenbelt to argue on grounds of physical and ecological sustainability, while neglecting what may be for them the real issue - cultural sustainability.

"To omit the S-factor²² is easier than to include it if one has a measurement-based approach to social realities. What can be measured is automatically respectable, valid, and authoritative. Correspondingly, what cannot be measured is suspect, dangerous, and less likely to find acceptance" (Benland 1988:456).

Adding to the silence of other values in the courtroom process is the imbalance of power, as community members are less versed in the language of the dominant scientific discourse (Carlin 1993). According to Colin Fussell, spokesperson for the Greenbelt Protection Society, it is not justice when community members have to argue against 'experts' with qualifications and resources, especially when it is evident that the experts 'objective' perspective is in fact highly subjective (pers.comm.1993).²³ These power imbalances that arise in court appear contrary to the spirit of the Resource Management Act which was supposed to make the resource decision making process more "user friendly" (pers.comm. Fussell 1993).

²¹ see Whittle (1993) for a detailed analysis of the meaning of 'place' for resource management.

²² "The S-Factor:Taha Wairua" was included as an important element in the Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy. The chapter was subtitled "The dimension of the Human Spirit". The purpose of this section of the Report was to "challenge the belief-system of social scientists, planners, and policymakers who discount the reality and importance of this dimension to society and to the individual..." (Ibid:451).

²³ On top of this disadvantage for community members arguing in the courtroom is the personal time and resource costs as well as the possibility of being made legally liable.

A way forward?

At present greenbelt issues are being determined through the Planning Tribunal. There is a loggerhead situation of conflicting values, which results in continuing appeals in court, and thus the supporting of those with more resources who can fight "all the way". Although the Regional Policy Statement includes retaining the values that the greenbelt has protected in the past, there is little trust in the planning process by the Greenbelt Protection Society, who see their role as protecting what the planners are neglecting to do.

Carlin (1993) advocates alternative dispute resolution techniques such as negotiation and mediation for resource management conflicts. These methods emphasise dialogue and are more able than the legal system to accommodate differing perspectives and values.

Although there is a fear that 'the greenbelt' will be lost under the new planning schemes, it is likely that it will only be the term itself that is lost, rather than what the greenbelt embodies. Although the term 'greenbelt' seems anomalous in the new planning environment, there is a need to recognise that it means something to the Christchurch community. Losing the term could be significant. Having the term 'greenbelt' is a reminder of all the things it signifies - it has become an icon. As Lowenthal (1961) points out, things with names are easier to distinguish than those that lack them (Ibid:254). If an alternative concept and term that is acceptable to the Christchurch community does not emerge, it may appear to the greenbelt advocates that what the icon signified has also been lost. In this case, there could be strong resistance to change, even if that change actually enhances what the greenbelt embodies.

Thus there is a need for dialogue between the different interest groups to break down the camps and achieve a shared understanding. To do this it is necessary to open up the decision making process because the issue is too public in its implications for it to be left entirely to the

responsibility of experts (Relph 1981:201). Trade-offs between unquantifiable values, as well as recognition of divergent interests requires the involvement of the community (Barbour 1980:156).

At present there does not appear to be any new terms for the greenbelt concept surfacing, but this could be due to the lack of communication and trust between greenbelt advocates and planners. Finding out exactly what the greenbelt means to people could be a way towards establishing a more appropriate term - one that does not imply restriction, or a blanket approach - for example, the rural enclave, the green constellation, or the green mosaic. Any change introduced must ensure that the local meaning structure, or existing place is respected. Change is an evolving process, and may in time produce something totally new (Berdoulay 1989 in Whittle 1993).

Under the Resource Management Act the responsibility for determining regional directions, policies, implementation and monitoring processes lies with regional government (Wheeler 1985:14). This allows for planning to look for the individuality of places and communities. With greater public participation, dialogue and trust, the responsibility for places and landscapes could come to lie with those who live in them and know them best. The concept of the greenbelt may be retained, or its meaning may change, but the important point is that planning will reflect the values and wishes of the community rather than being subjugated to the 'objective' values of the global dollar.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The greenbelt concept introduced from Britain has taken on meaning for the people of Christchurch beyond its function as a planning tool. This is despite the fact that the greenbelt does not provide an accessible recreational resource or a necessarily pleasant visual landscape. The strong emotional response that any threats to the greenbelt generates is an important indicator that there is more at stake than simply a loss of land. Underlying values that are entrenched in our culture about the need for a strong rural/urban distinction are at the root of concern over the greenbelt.

Under the Town and Country Planning Acts of 1953 and 1977 the greenbelt zone was an expression of meeting the 'matters of national importance' objective of avoiding urban encroachment into rural areas. However, under the Resource Management Act the objective of sustainability of natural and physical resources is not necessarily analogous to the provision and maintenance of the greenbelt zone. This has obviously raised concern for those people who strongly identify with the greenbelt concept, (including some planners), who want the greenbelt retained.

This project has served to examine why the greenbelt is such a strongly felt concept by tracing its historical and cultural meaning. It concludes that although the Christchurch greenbelt does not play an essential role for cultural identification as it does in Britain, it still represents something that people deem to be important. In this respect the greenbelt has become a local icon, representing the feeling that the countryside should remain a place that is distinctively rural.

This value is generally one of amenity although it may contain spiritual values for some. Amenity values, under the Resource Management Act section 7, are to be maintained and enhanced. However, it is questionable whether the greenbelt zone can be retained in its exact form under the Act. Its blanket controlling approach is inappropriate in the new planning climate. This does not necessarily mean that the values that the greenbelt embodies can not be met. The Christchurch City Council has recently undertaken studies about the significance of the Port Hills, the Estuary and the Canterbury Plains, looking at their amenity values and their contribution to the identity of Christchurch. The belief that each landscape feature needs to have its distinctive characteristics strengthened includes a recognition that the rural/urban definition is important to the Christchurch community's 'sense of place'. As this concept is also contained in the Draft Regional Policy Statement, it is likely that the underlying value that the greenbelt ensures will be retained in the future.

The term 'greenbelt' is not seen by the Council as a necessary part of this concept of rural/urban distinction (pers.comm. Andrew Craig 1993). Nevertheless, the word greenbelt has meaning to the Christchurch community²⁴. It has become an icon, summing up those feelings about the need for countryside in one convenient word. However, its cultural and historical origins in Britain and its different meaning there brings to question how useful the term really is for the future identity of Christchurch. A concept which suggests its real meaning to the people of Christchurch may emerge, but for this to occur there will have to be meaningful dialogue between the various interests. An important aspect of this dialogue will be the acknowledgement and respect of intangible values. It is from the recognition of these values that an indigenous concept will emerge.

²⁴ The word 'greenbelt' was used a lot in submissions to the Regional Council in relation to the Draft Policy Statement, even though the word was only used once in the Statement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barber, Max 1991 "Green Belts - outmoded concept or challenge for the future" Planning Quarterly no.102

Barker, W H & H J Brown 1979 Peri-urban land use Joint Centre for Environmental Sciences Occasional Paper no.6 University of Canterbury and Lincoln College in association with Davie Lovell-Smith & Partners

Barbour, Ian 1980 Technology, Environment and Human Values Praeger New York

Bassett, Shelagh 1985 The Dunedin Townbelt dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the Diploma of Landscape Architecture Lincoln University

Benevolo, Leonardo 1980 The History of the City Scholar Press London

Benland, Catherine 1988 "The S-Factor: Taha Wairua" in Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy vol.3 pp.451-468

Blacksell, Mark & Andrew W Gilg 1981 The Countryside: planning and change George Allen & Unwin London

Bourassa, Steven C 1991 The aesthetics of landscape Belhaven Press London

Briggs, Liz & Andrew Craig 1992 The Port Hills - their contribution to Christchurch City Planning Policy Unit Christchurch City Council

Briggs, Liz & Andrew Craig 1992 Rural amenity assessment Environmental Policy and Planning Unit Christchurch City Council

Buder, Stanley 1990 Visionaries and Planners Oxford University Press New York

Canterbury United Council 1985 Canterbury Regional Planning Scheme Section 1: Settlement Distribution

Canterbury Regional Council 1993 Draft Regional Policy Statement Consultation Document June 1993 Report no. 93(6)

Carlin, Alison 1993 Setting the Table: an approach to the identification of parties for environmental dispute resolutions thesis presented in partial fulfilment of Master of Science in Resource Management Lincoln University

Challenger, S 1979 "The development of early Canterbury landscapes" in The Landscape no.7

Cheney, Jim 1986 "Postmodern environmental ethics: ethics as bioregional narrative" in Environmental Ethics vol.11

Christchurch Development 1970 5th edition (1st edition 1967) City Engineers Dept Bascards Ltd Christchurch

- DeLuca, Russell 1991 "Rural Subdivision Controls - where to now?" Planning Quarterly no. 102 June 1991
- Eldred-Grigg, Stevan 1982 A new history of Canterbury John McIndoe Ltd Dunedin
- Fairburn, Miles 1975 "The rural myth and the new urban frontier: an approach to NZ social history 1870 - 1940" New Zealand Journal of History vol.9 pp.3-21
- Fairburn, Miles 1989 The Ideal Society and its enemies: the foundations of modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900 Auckland University Press
- Featherstone, Mike 1991 Consumer Culture and Postmodernism Sage Publications London
- Field, M D 1984 "District Schemes and management plans: are they restrictive or helpful? a personal view" New Zealand Parks and Recreation vol.6 no.10
- Flew, Anthony 199 A Dictionary of Philosophy Pan Books in association with the Macmillan Press Great Britain
- Grant, Joy 1988 "Planning futures: New Zealand" in Planning Quarterly no. 92
- Grinlinton, David 1990 "Resource Law Reform" in New Zealand Property vol.18 no.9
- Guide to the Town and Country Planning Act 1977 Department of Works and Development
- Hall, Peter 1987 Urban and Regional Planning Allen & Unwin London
- Hamer D A 1979 "Towns in Nineteenth Century New Zealand" New Zealand Journal of History vol.13 no.1
- Herington, John 1990 Beyond Green Belts: managing urban growth in the 21st century Jessica Kingsley Publishers and The Regional Studies Association London
- Hinman, David D 1988 Rural Planning Option: Issues at the Fringe Paper presented to the NZ Planning Institute Conference Christchurch, 6-9 April 1988
- Hough, Michael 1990 Out of Place: restoring identity to the regional landscape Yale University Press United States
- Howard, Ebenezer 1946 Garden Cities of Tomorrow edited with a preface by F J Osborn, with an introductory essay by Lewis Mumford Faber & Faber (first published 1902)
- Jackman, Tony 1979 "Now is the time: our present and future role" in The Landscape no.8
- Jones, Lawrence 1989 "Versions of the dream: literature and the search for identity" in Culture and Identity in New Zealand (eds) David Novitz & Bill Willmott GP Books Wellington
- Kilvington, Margaret 1993 Multiple use management of New Zealand's indigenous forests - a rose by any other name... thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the Master of Science in Resource Management Lincoln University

- Kirby, Val 1989 "Landscapes for leisure" in The Landscape no.42/43
- La Gory, Mark & John Pipkin 1981 Urban Social Space Wadsworth Publishing Co. California
- Lowe, Philip D and Wolfgang Rudig 1986 "Review article: Political ecology and the social sciences" in The British Journal of Political Science vol.16 no.4
- Lowenthal, David 1961 "Geography, experience, and imagination" in Annals of the Association of American Geographers vol.51 no.3
- Lozano, Eduardo E 1990 Community design and the culture of cities Cambridge University Press New York
- Marx, Leo 1964 The Machine in the Garden Oxford University Press New York
- McCreary, Scott & John Gammon 1990 "Finding solutions to disputes - it can be done well" Planning Quarterly no.100
- Meister, A D 1976 " "The times they are a-changing": an historical look at small holdings and society's attitudes" in New Zealand Valuer vol.26
- Michael, Donald N 1977 "Planning's challenge to the systems approach" in Futures Research Harold A Linstone & W H Clive Simmonds (eds) Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Canada
- Millar, C Barclay 1977 Preparation of the Canterbury Regional Planning Scheme (Section One) Progress Report (Technical Report no.213A Canterbury Regional Planning Authority September 1977
- Mumford, Lewis 1944 The Culture of Cities Secker & Warburg London
- Mumford, Lewis 1961 The City in History Secker & Warburg London
- Munton, Richard 1983 London's Green Belt: containment in practice George Allen & Unwin London
- New Zealand Federation of University Women 1977 Sydenham: The model borough of old Christchurch Pegasus Press Christchurch
- New Zealand Federation of University Women 1989 St Albans: from swamp to suburbs Caxton Press Christchurch
- Oakley, Lenore 1960 Harry Ell and his Summit Road Caxton Press Christchurch
- O'Regan, Tipene 1989 "The Ngai Tahu Claim" in Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi (ed) I H Kawharu Oxford University Press Auckland
- O'Riordon, Timothy 1983 "Planning for environmental protection" in Geography and Regional Planning (ed) J H Johnson Geo Books England
- Osborn, F J 1946 Green Belt Cities Faber & Faber

Perkins Harvey C, P Ali Memon, Simon R Swaffield, Lisa Gelfand 1993 "The Urban Environment" Environmental Planning in New Zealand (eds) P Ali Memon & Harvey C Perkins The Dunmore Press New Zealand

Phillips, Jock 1989 "What is happening to New Zealand society" in The Landscape no.40

Planning Tribunal 1988 Decision numbers C46/88, C18/89, C20/89, C21/89, C22/89, C23/89

Plawinski, Victor 1983 "Cluster development - an alternative for housing in New Zealand" in Planning Quarterly no. 69

Public Access New Zealand 1993 Public Meeting, The Stringleman Room, Canterbury Public Library

Pullen, J M 1977 Greenspace and the cities Australian Institute of Urban Studies Publication no.67 Canberra

Read, Stuart M 1989 Island-bred illusions? Tracing myths of national identity dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the Diploma of Landscape Architecture Lincoln University

Reinharz, Shulamit 1983 "Experiential analysis: a contribution to feminist research" in Theories of Women's Studies (eds) Bowles and Klein Routledge and Kegan Paul London and New York

Relph, Edward 1970 "An inquiry into the relations between phenomenology and geography" in Canadian Geographer vol.14 no.3

Relph, Edward 1976 Place and Placelessness Pion Ltd London

Relph, Edward 1981 Rational landscapes and humanistic geography Croom Helm London

Resource Management Act 1991

Rooney, Derrick 1993 "Cities backdrop needs care" in The Press 25/6/93 p.13

Ross, H C 1986 "Cleaning the spring. An owners view of small holdings" in New Zealand Valuer vol.26

Russell, Bertrand 1948 In Praise of Idleness George Allen and Unwin Ltd London

Short, John R 1989 The Humane City Basil Blackwell

Simmons, Les 1991 "Where to draw the line - the Rodney experience rural/farmlet/rural residential?" in Planning Quarterly no. 102

Sinclair, Keith 1988 A History of New Zealand Penguin Books Auckland

Smart, Barry 1990 "Modernity, postmodernity and the present" in Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity Sage Publications London

Snyder, Gary 1990 The Practice of the Wild North Point Press San Francisco

- Squire, Shelagh 1993 "Beatrix Potter tourism" in Area vol.25 no.1
- Steiner, George 1976 "The city under attack" in Ekistics vol.42 no.253
- Stephens, F B 1937 "Population as a factor in planning" in Planning series no.2 Bulletin No.8 Wellington
- Steven, Rob 1989 "Land and white settler colonialism: the case of Aotearoa" in Culture and Identity in New Zealand (eds) David Novitz & Bill Willmott GP Books Wellington
- Stroud, R G 1985 "The effect of the demand for small holdings on rural planning" in New Zealand Valuer vol.26
- Sutcliffe, Anthony (ed) 1980 The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800 - 1914 Mansell London
- The City Plan: the city of Christchurch district planning scheme 1982 November 2nd review
The Press 9/10/92; 31/10/92; 4/1/93; 5/2/93; 23/4/93; 28/4/93; 19/8/93; 20/8/93; 21/8/93; 1/9/93
- Tipples, Rupert 1992 "Christchurch - The first Garden City?" in Horticulture in New Zealand vol.3 no.1
- Town and Country Planning Act 1977
- Tremain, K J 1985 "Fringe urban lands as they affect city planners" in New Zealand Valuer vol.26
- Trevena, Stephanie 1990 "Urban Planners in the Dark" Planning Quarterly no. 97
- Tuan, Yi-Fu 1971 "Geography, phenomenology and the study of human nature" in Canadian Geographer vol.15 no.3
- Tuan, Yi-Fu 1976 "Humanistic geography" in Annals of the Association of American Geographers vol.66 no.2
- Turner, Bryan S 1990 "Periodization and politics in the postmodern" in Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity Sage Publications London
- Webber, Melvin M 1963 "Order in propinquity" in Cities and Space: the future use of urban land (ed) Lowdon Wingo Jr Resources for the Future Inc. The John Hopkins Press USA
- Wheeler, Peter b 1985 "Regional planning in the Manawatu: a background paper" in Planning Quarterly no. 77
- Whittle, Joanne 1993 'Your place or mine': heritage management and a sense of place thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of Master in Science in Resource Management Lincoln University
- Whyte, William H 1968 The Last Landscape Doubleday & Company Inc. New York
- Wilson, William H 1980 "The ideology, aesthetics and politics of the City Beautiful Movement"

in The rise of modern urban planning (ed) Anthony Sutcliffe Mansell London

Wurster, Catherine Bauer 1963 "The form and structure of the future urban complex" in Cities and Space: the future use of urban land (ed) Lowdon Wingo Jr Resources for the Future Inc. The John Hopkins Press USA

Personal Communications 1993

Barber, Max	Canterbury Regional Council
Craig, Andrew	Landscape architect, Christchurch City Council
Densem, Graeham	Dept. of Landscape Architecture, Lincoln University
Fussell, Colin	Spokesperson for the Greenbelt Protection Society
Karaitiana, Bill	Iwi liaison, Canterbury Regional Council
Kerr, Chris	Centre for Resource Management, Lincoln University
Kirby, Val	Dept. of Landscape Architecture, Lincoln University
Lochhead, Lynne	Centre for Resource Management
Morrison, Keith	Dept. of Natural Resource Engineering, Lincoln University
Perkins, Harvey	Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Lincoln University
Shepherd, Allan	Ministry for the Environment, Christchurch
Swaffield, Simon	Dept. of Landscape Architecture, Lincoln University

APPENDIX ONE

Characteristics of the urban fringe (Hinman 1988:2).

- a) It will generally be an area under pressure - often competition for uses both rural and urban related.
- b) It will comprise a mixture of activities, often ranging from areas of grazing to intensive horticulture to conservation zones to urban-related institutional, industrial, recreational and residential activities.
- c) Depending on local zoning policies, it may include an area in transition, eg. from rural to urban.
- d) It can be a very productive area - it has been claimed that the peri-urban area can or should be able to provide most of the food needs of the city it surrounds.
- e) It is an area where town and country meet in a number of ways - eg. production of food for the city often includes provision for sale direct to the consumers from the farm property (roadside stalls).
- f) It is the area where activities important to the city but which are found outside the city because either a large land area requirement and/or certain detrimental aspects which preclude an urban location, eg. airports, sewerage farms, freezing works, quarrying operations, rubbish tips, golf courses, racing tracks (horses, dogs and motor vehicles), prisons.
- g) It tends to be an area of closer subdivision than further out in the country. In years gone by the five, 10 and 20 acre block phenomenon was concentrated around the urban fringe.
- h) It is an area which does not normally have full urban services such as a reticulated water supply and sewerage system, although there may be pressure on the authorities to provide such systems.
- i) It may include small settlements, once remote from the city but now perhaps threatened by coalescence.

14. Objectives and policies for the Green Belt Area

14.1 Basis

The detailed objectives for the Green Belt Area are derived from the overall regional objectives and the settlement distribution objectives set out previously. The policies by which these objectives may be achieved are given below and the means of implementing these policies is contained in Part 5 of this Scheme.

14.2 Objectives and policies

Objectives

- (a) To conserve and provide for the wise use and management of agricultural, forest and mineral resources.
- (b) To avoid the encroachment of urban development on land having a high actual or potential value for food production.
- (c) To protect areas possessing high amenity value or being of actual, or potential, value for recreation from change which would detract from that amenity or inhibit the realisation of the recreational value.
- (d) To maintain intensity of settlement characteristic of rural areas.
- (e) To recognise the special characteristics of the Port Hills and their value to the Region.
- (f) To protect the Christchurch International Airport from encroachment by urban development and safeguard its development potential.
- (g) To protect certain public works and institutions deemed to be appropriate to the Green Belt Area.
- (h) To encourage the consolidation of existing urban development so as to facilitate the efficient use of land and the economic use of all capital resources including the orderly and economic provision of services.
- (i) To prevent unplanned settlement and to avoid the spread of uses having urban characteristics into areas adjoining the main settlements.
- (j) To avoid the unnecessary coalescence of settlements.

Policies

- (1) The creation of additional lots should be prevented except where necessary to improve the utilisation of the land for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, recreation, mineral extraction or the conservation of areas of ecological importance.
- (2) The development and improvement of the airport should be provided for in accordance with an agreed comprehensive plan.
- (3) The accommodation of recreational activities requiring extensive areas of open space should be provided for.
- (4) The continued use and development of existing major public and institutional uses, listed in Schedule III, should be provided for, and the repair, modification or reconstruction of existing structures and the addition of new structures should be allowed provided no change in the character of any of these uses occurs.

- (5) New public uses should only be considered appropriate in the Green Belt Area when they are not associated with residential use or do not generate employment based permanently on the site and require to be located in the Green Belt Area to fulfil the purpose for which they are intended.
- (6) Rationalisation of unplanned settlements may be allowed for in District Schemes where this can be achieved without resulting in any outward extension of the unplanned settlement, nor a significant increase in housing.
- (7) Provision may be made in appropriate areas defined in District Schemes for rural residential use or part-time farming or both such uses, provided that:
 - (a) the size, location of, and planning controls for such uses are such that they will not tend to create a nucleus for further expansion of these areas or the expansion of settlements elsewhere;
 - (b) the areas are located far enough away from urban areas to avoid creating a transition zone between urban and rural areas, and accordingly should tend to be located towards the outer rather than the inner edge of the Green Belt.
- (8) **Except** as provided for above, the erection of further dwellings and the erection or material extension of commercial, industrial, institutional, public utility and community uses should not be permitted:
unless (a) necessary to the operation of local agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction or recreation **and** likely to remain so **and** not likely to add to or create a nucleus for the formation of an unplanned settlement;
or (b) where the necessity to erect or extend such uses is adjudged to be of greater national and regional interest that the prevention of further settlement **and** promotes the achievement of other objectives and policies of this Scheme.
- (9) The particular planning and co-ordination problems of the Port Hills should be recognised and a special study undertaken in terms of Schedule IV to assist in determining the future limits of urban development and appropriate land management on the Port Hills.

14.3 Planning map

The Green Belt Area is delimited on Regional Planning Map No. 1, Sheets 2 and 3.

Rezoning sought in green belt

By PETER MATHIAS

Proposals to rezone two blocks of rural land in north-west Christchurch would not compromise the city's green belt, a resource management hearing was told yesterday.

The owners of two blocks of land adjoining Nunweek Park and Tulett Park, both within the green belt, want it rezoned from rural to a Residential G2 zone.

The proposed new zoning would provide for low-density residential development and retirement villages as a controlled use.

The proposal has attracted 410 submissions. Evidence relating to the proposed change is being heard before two Christchurch City Council-appointed commissioners, Messrs David Collins and Ian Calvert.

The hearing was told if the change was allowed up to 200 residential sections could be provided at the 20-hectare Nunweek block, owned by Becmead Investments Ltd, R. and J. Macleod, and Parklands Farm.

A further 160 sections could be provided at the 15-hectare Tulett Park block of land, owned by Valliant Farms.

Both blocks of land are leased out by their owners and cropped.

Counsel for the applicants, Mr John Milligan, said that by 1995 the city would be running out of land for residential development.

The only ways of accommodating the need for more land for housing in Christchurch were by

rezoning green belt land and an intensification of urban development. Both would be required, he said.

The proposed rezoning would not compromise or significantly affect green belt policy.

A consultant planner, Ms Fiona Norton, for the applicants, said there was a geographical imbalance within the Christchurch metropolitan area in the location of undeveloped residential land, with a clear shortage in the north-west.

"The green belt policy must not freeze the city in a time warp, unable to respond appropriately to changing needs of its citizens," she said. What was proposed was a minor adjustment to the green belt boundary, which would create a more defensible boundary in the long-term.

Mr Glynn Christie, a consultant planner who gave evidence on behalf of the council, said the proposed change should not proceed as it was contrary to existing planning policies and premature in light of the council's review of its plan.

He said there was insufficient evidence to justify the applicants' claims of an urgent need for land for residential development in the north-west of the city.

As at June last year there was approximately 120 hectares of vacant land in the north-west of Christchurch, accounting for 10 per cent of all vacant land in the city.

The hearing continues today.

Green belt

Sir,—Christchurch citizens must be aghast over recent applications for developments within the green belt. We have the huge complex planned for the Groyne, and now we have the decision by the Shirley Golf Club to apply for rezoning of some of its land for residential development. When is all this going to stop? Overseas countries protect their green-belt areas. Why can't we? If we keep losing portions of green belt we could end up with a shadow of its former size. We have a green belt or we don't. It is the duty of the city council to protect our assets. The regional council in its draft statement recommends protecting the green belt. It should not be too difficult for the city council to insert clauses in the city plan giving full protection to the green belt. Is the city council prepared to sit back and to see the green belt decimated? What are councillors elected for?—Yours, etc.,

B. R. HANSEN. *Press*
August 10, 1993. 16-8-93

Sir,—Once again pressure is being put on city planners to subdivide the green belt, this time to set up a non-conforming use, subdivide the site, and build a house (December 24). Over the years many, and often plausible, reasons have been given for subdividing and building houses on the green belt. Now we have expense given as one reason for not using an industrial site for an industrial activity. If this is allowed one can imagine the rush of demands to permit further housing subdivision. Green belt intrusions are accelerating. In the category of 1 to 2.9 hectares, subdivision applications have quadrupled in the last three years. In the last six years 2000 hectares of green belt have been subdivided and subject to building. The green belt must be protected absolutely, as in some other countries, so that it will still be there for future generations also to enjoy. Yours, etc.

APPENDIX FOUR

Letters to the Editor The Press 1992/93

A green belt viewed as physical from or condensed urbanisation may also frame growth of lands which are for aquifer protection and such separate issues in planning and may not green belt analysis. In Christchurch opposition is to any repetitive process. A green belt not be a single of contrast to ion, but rather pattern of multi-with rings, to layers of "denseness." Christchurch was large green belt, ark. ately, as the y grew, this par-green belt was over, and sub-ion continued t, in the form of nodes, on, Riccarton, and these have ally expanded spaces between at without new t green belts throughout that interlinkage. supporters of the rural green belt growth to be the densification of existing urbanised a blanket prohibition the existing on belt. approach needs to ced with a com-ve scrutiny of all g undeveloped in the city, with tion to creating ermanent green further break up 100 years of sub-owth and to cre-le environments large trees and tat for flocks of

birds, preferably native species.

Christchurch may well derive greater long-term benefit from denying all intensive development of present open spaces, like former hospital grounds and airfields, remnant swamps and such like, to create from these, new green belts with the values of a Hagley Park or a Riccarton Bush.

Imagine our city without Hagley Park. I would say an immeasurable loss of beauty and contrast. But what Hagley Park does for the central city area, other similar value areas in the suburbs and particularly if there is some linkage between them by land or waterway, will similarly provide enhanced quality of life for residents.

If Christchurch is subject to continual pressure for further residential growth, then much more analysis on a city-wide scale is required than merely focussing on intermittent nibbles at the rural green belt. Some parts of the rural green belt may be better for residential expansion than any alternative loss of existing large "within city" open spaces.

Within the present city developed boundary, every sizeable or significant open area not already protected by legal reservation should be included in every forum which argues the green belt/city growth issue. The spirit and values of green belts to every one of us are far more than just what happens on the periphery of Christchurch. — B K SLY.

Green belt

Sir,—Colin C. East (September 1) offers an absurd response to my earlier letter which supported enlightened planning and enforcement to protect the attributes of the green belt. Mr East tries to denigrate sound argument by labelling it "emotive" and then accuses those moved to act as "textbook theorists." His protestations are in vain, however, as public opinion, backed by more enlightened legislation, begins to shape both the attitude of the authorities and the results of their deliberations. Certain of the statements offered by Mr East are contradictory. Subdividing often threatens viability rather than enhancing it. The short-term vagaries of weather and vegetable supply should not diminish our ability to nurture a valuable, but vulnerable, finite natural resource.—Yours, etc.,

COLIN I. FUSSELL *Press*
September 1, 1993. *6.9.93*

Port Hills

Sir,—I congratulate you on an excellent article, "City's backdrop needs care" (June 26). It raises a fear which the Hillsborough Residents' Association has long held: through incremental development of sections of the Port Hills we are going to lose this distinctive backdrop to our city. Many former green belt areas have already been rezoned residential, though as yet untouched. While the recreational value of the Port Hills is immense, the aesthetic quality as an unbroken landscape of constantly changing beauty is an invaluable asset to Christchurch. We trust that this quality will be carefully preserved by the provisions of the city council's plan, now being drafted. Without the Port Hills as a natural backdrop, Christchurch will become "just another urban estate".—Yours, etc.,

JENNY WALKER, *7255*
President. *2/7/93*
June 29, 1993.

Sir,—Your editorial of April 23 setting out reasons for the retention and protection of the Green Belt is timely. Christchurch is unique and is renowned for its beautiful parks, open spaces and lush, highly productive soil, of which the green belt is a significant part and should not be sacrificed for financial gain, lifestyle blocks or subdivision. People who are serious about living on the north-west side of the city already have a wide choice of existing houses and sections and, as you point out, there are the towns of Rolleston, Rangiora and Kaiapoi, with plenty of room for development, making it unnecessary to erode the green belt and therefore doing much to contain the urban sprawl.—Yours, etc., *Press*

and apt. The green belt is a resource. Its soils provide both produce and jobs for rural and city folk. It restricts pollution of water and air and isolates the airport from creeping urbanisation, which would restrict its activities and the flow-on effect of money and jobs to the city and nation. Our rural boundaries have a pleasant and healthy impact on us all. With an almost static population in Christchurch, there is no proven need for growth in the north-west, while there are, however, obvious easy options for developers to encourage Asian investment. A permanent change of land use to gain short-term employment and long-term profits for overseas interests does not indicate sustainable growth as required by the Resource Management Act. There are sites within or beyond the green belt for development and redevelopment of homes and hotels, though the prospect might not seem so glossy at first. Your concerns must reach the heart of all those who have sought to retain this resource as a benefit to all for so long.—Yours, etc., *Press*

J. STEPHENS. *29.4.93*
April 23, 1993.

Sir—There has been publicity in the newspapers recently on the Resource Management Act, with regard to the rezoning of land. It is a social commentary on society when the system seems to dictate that one's case is defended in a Court of Appeal and the success or failure is dictated by the amount of financial resource that you have available to you. Naturally the developers, in most cases, have more money and have more money available to them to try and win their case. The ordinary citizen does not have access to these resources and is therefore at distinct disadvantage.

M. W. BARNI
November 10, 1993

Green belt

Sir,—I write in wholehearted support of your editorial regarding Christchurch's green belt (April 23). It disturbs me that this valuable belt can, seemingly so easily, be infringed upon by developers keen on making big money — at the expense of the majority of residents of Christchurch. I am concerned that the unchecked sprawl of Christchurch will put an enormous amount of pressure on Christchurch's aquifers, sewerage and transport systems. The resulting impact on our natural and agricultural environments would, I believe, be detrimental to us all. I think your editorial reflects the concerns of many people in Christchurch and I am concerned that we have little or no say in what is happening. How do our small voices compete with big companies with big money? I think Christchurch's green belt is an important environmental and aesthetic asset, and one we should go to great lengths to protect. Let us set a precedent for controlled urban development and environmental concern.