

CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN

**CHESTER STREET EAST / DAWSON STREET
RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE AREA RECORD FORM**

Location



The Chester Street East / Dawson Street Residential Heritage Area encompasses Dawson Street, including those properties addressing Kilmore Street, and all those properties in the section of Chester Street East bounded by Madras Street in the west and extending to the Chester Street Reserve and 147 Chester Street in the east.

Summary of Current Heritage Protection and Recognition

There are three scheduled items within the area: 250 Kilmore Street (scheduled item 319) and the duplex townhouses at 86-88 and 98-100 Chester Street East (scheduled items 115 and 116 respectively). The Chester Street East properties are also listed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (list entries # 1881 & 7323).

There are no significant trees located within the Heritage Area that are scheduled on the district plan.

Christchurch District Plan Zoning

The properties within the HA are zoned Residential City Centre; Chester Street East Reserve has an Open Space Community Parks zoning.

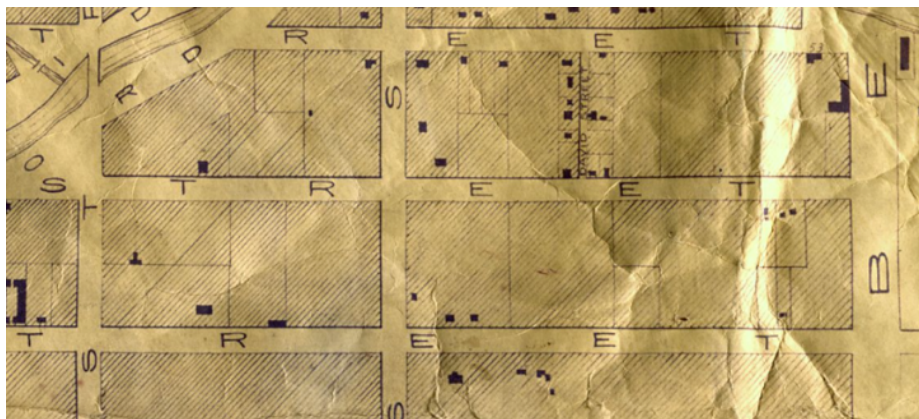
Summary of Heritage Values:

This Heritage Area is comprised of a recreational reserve, an electricity substation and 50 residential properties, which chronicle the history of development from the mid-19th century until the present day. The area embodies historic, architectural and contextual values relating to its historic demographic profile, range of domestic typologies and styles and its central city location.

The area is located within the north-eastern sector of the inner-city, south of both the Ōtākaro Avon River and a site of great importance to Ngāi Tahu, the kāinga of Ōtautahi. The original 1850 colonial survey of Christchurch laid out the path of Chester Street and by 1858 a private road, known as David Street and then Carter's Lane before it was given its current name in 1915, had been formed on Town Reserve 170 between Kilmore Street and Chester Street. Within the area houses date from the mid-19th century onwards and represent a range of domestic typologies and styles, including the colonial vernacular cottage, Victorian and Edwardian villas, and over a century of townhouse design.

The dwellings within this area are a mixture of single-family homes and townhouses, the latter dating to the early 1890s, later 20th and early 21st centuries. They address the street, typically occupy rectangular lots, and represent a diverse population of early residents; from labourers and warehousemen to architects and lawyers.

Although there are four vacant lots within the area, three of which were cleared following the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes, the area retains a good level of integrity and authenticity. The intimate scale and character of Dawson Street is particularly notable in comparison to the small inner-city streets north of Salisbury Street, which have largely been transformed by redevelopment and intensification over the last ten years.



Detail from CE Fooks' survey plan of Christchurch, 1862; showing the development of Dawson Street (then David) by this time. CCLMaps 212667.

History of Subdivision and Development:

'Although Ōtautahi is the general Māori name used nowadays for Christchurch, it is specifically a kāinga nohoanga (settlement) and kāinga mahinga kai (food-gathering place) on the banks of the Ōtākaro (Avon River). There are numerous references to the location of the kāinga nohoanga, but all place it within the same general area: the junction of the now-disappeared Free's Creek and the Ōtākaro, or St Mary's Creek and the Ōtākaro, or near Kilmore St close to the present-day Christchurch City Fire Station. The settlement was established by Tautahi, the son of the Ngāi Tahu rangatira (chief) Huikai. Tautahi and his people stayed here during their frequent food-gathering expeditions to the extensive wetlands that once existed throughout Christchurch. In 1868 Hakopa Te Ata-o-Tū from Ngāi Tūāhuriri claimed Ōtautahi as a mahinga kai in the Native Land Court, which the Court dismissed on the basis that the land had already been sold. During the 1879 Smith-Nairn Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Ngāi Tahu land claims, Ngāi Tūāhuriri kaumātua recorded Ōtautahi as a kāinga nohoanga, he kāinga tūturu, and kāinga mahinga kai. The foods gathered here included tuna (eels), inaka (whitebait), mata (juvenile whitebait), kōkopu (native trout), koukoupāra (giant kōkopu), pārerā (grey duck), pūtakitaki (paradise duck), raipo (New Zealand scaup), tataa (brown duck), pāteke (brown teal), pora ('Māori turnip') and aruhe (bracken fernroot).'¹

¹ Ōtautahi: Kā Hura Manu; <https://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas>.

The colonial survey of 1850 established the grid pattern of central Christchurch. In 1858 the parcel of land bounded by Kilmore Street, Barbadoes Street, Chester Street East and the Town Belt (Fitzgerald Avenue), which had been set aside for an abattoir and slaughterhouses, was offered for sale by the provincial government. This block included Town Reserve 170, on which Dawson Street was subsequently developed. By 1862, when CE Fooks mapped the city (see above), there were very few buildings located on that portion of Chester Street East which is within the Heritage Area; by contrast David Street was already well-developed. In 1877 there was only one building on the south side of Chester Street East between Madras and Barbadoes Streets but the north side boasted a handful of buildings and east of Barbadoes Street was already quite built up. The dwellings erected in the later 19th century on lots between Madras and Barbadoes Streets tended to larger in scale and typically became the homes of higher-class families.

SALE OF TOWN RESERVES.

PUBLIC NOTICE.

NOTICE is hereby given, that the several Sections of LAND specified in the subjoined list (comprising all the unsold portions of the Town Reserves of Christchurch) will be put up to Sale by Public Auction, at the White Hart Hotel, Christchurch, on **TUESDAY** the Fourth day of May next (subject to the usual conditions of sale), in addition to those already notified.

Sale to commence at Twelve o'clock.

By order of His Honor the Superintendent,

T. B. KEELE,

For the Provincial Secretary.

Provincial Secretary's Office, Christchurch, April 20, 1858.

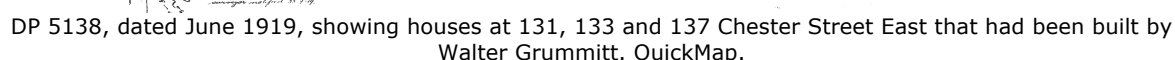
LOT.	SECTIONS.	AREA.	PRICE.
		A. R. P.	£ S. D.
154	No. 48	1 0 17	57 10 6
155	" 66, 67, 68	3 1 11	172 11 6
156	" 204, 205, 206	3 3 30	204 15 0
157	" 384, 385, 393A, 394A	2 0 32	114 8 0
158	" 395A, 396, 398	2 3 26	151 9 0
159	" 400, 401, 402, 403	4 1 30	230 15 0
160	" 395, 397, 399	3 1 12	172 18 0
161	" 393, 394	2 0 35	115 7 6
162	" 391, 392	0 3 8	41 12 0
163	" 415, 417	2 0 35	115 7 6
164	" 425, 427	2 0 35	115 7 6
The following lots are situate between Kilmore Street East, Chester Street East, Barbadoes Street, and the Town Belt, and comprise the sites originally reserved for an Abattoir and Slaughter Houses.		28 2 31	£1492 1 6
165	No. 571	1 0 0	52 0 0
166	" 572	1 0 0	52 0 0
167	" 573	1 0 0	52 0 0
168	" 574	1 0 0	52 0 0
169	" 575	1 0 0	52 0 0
170	" 576	1 0 0	52 0 0
171	" 577	1 0 0	52 0 0
172	" 578	1 0 0	52 0 0
173	" 579	1 0 0	52 0 0
		37 2 31	£1960 1 6

Lyttelton Times 24 April 1858, p. 5. PapersPast.

Small cottages at the east end of the Heritage Area, including those in Dawson Street, were typically rental properties in which lived tradesmen and artisans. As tenants (eventually owners), Joseph and Mary Scarlett lived in No. 6 Dawson Street between the mid-1890s and mid-1910s; Joseph was a builder, as was William Gladden who owned the property between 1860 and 1913. Further west, even a large-scale villa such as that at 154 Chester Street East could be a rental property; in this case a Mrs Hunter owned the house between 1895 and c.1920 but it was occupied in the early 20th century by Henry Heilyer, a warehouseman, and Arthur Peverill, a photographer.

In November 1877 a petition, which asked that the city council take over Carter's Lane, was presented by six Dawson Street owners and occupiers; it was accepted in November 1878. Already, in January of that year, the council had laid concrete kerbing in Carter's Lane, suggesting that the private status of the roadway was in name only by that time. A second petition from local residents seeking a name change to Dawson Street was accepted by the council in September 1915; at that time it was felt that the small street

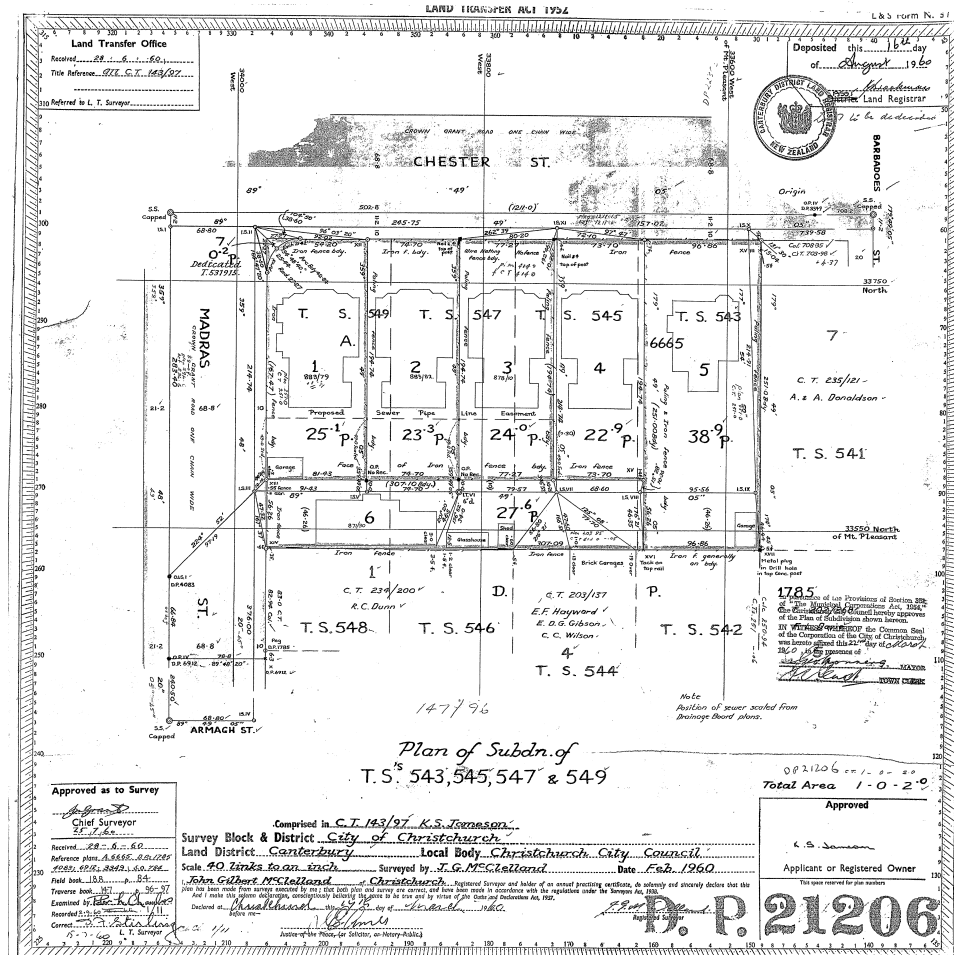
The cluster of four square-plan cottages on the south side of Chester Street East immediately west of Barbadoes Street appear to have been built in c.1880. No. 128 was offered for rent in November of 1882 and was initially the home of Alfred Thornton, an upholsterer. On the north side of Chester Street East Walter Grummitt, a draper, built three houses in c.1900, one for himself, one for his business partner and another for rental. Two of the three Grummitt square-plan villas survive (Nos. 131 and 133).



Of the fourteen townhouse or apartment buildings within the Heritage Area, the oldest were built in the early 1890s by William Widdowson on a large property he owned at the corner of Madras Street and Chester Street East. These townhouses (two of the four built by Widdowson were demolished after the Canterbury earthquakes) represent an early instance of medium-density housing in the inner-city. After the turn of the 20th century a number of houses in Chester Street East and the hospital that once stood at 254 Kilmore Street were offering board or bed and breakfast accommodation; this would likely have increased the number of people living within the Heritage Area. Between c.1970 and 2000 seven apartment buildings were erected in Dawson Street and Chester Street East, thus continuing the pattern established by Widdowson. The five townhouse developments undertaken since 2011 attest to the ongoing desirability of living in the central city. With a couple of exceptions the 30 stand-alone dwellings in the area were all built before the Great Depression.

After the 2011 Canterbury earthquake the section of Chester Street East west of Barbadoes Street was red zoned, the remainder of the Heritage Area being located within Zone 2 of the CBD cordon. A number of buildings within the area were subsequently

demolished and some sites remain vacant, while others have been redeveloped. Having acquired the Chester Street East Reserve in 2010, Christchurch City Council upgraded the pocket park in c.2015.



DP 21206, dated February 1960, showing footprint of the four Widdowson duplex townhouses. QuickMap.



West end of Chester Street East in July 2021. A McEwan.

Historic names and uses

Chester Street East was named, as were a number of streets within the central city, after an Anglican bishopric in the United Kingdom. Chester is in the north-west of England, south of Liverpool. Separated by the Ōtākaro Avon River, the east and west portions of Chester Street were being distinguished from one another as early as 1858 (CCL Street Names Index).

Dawson Street was initially a private road called David Street; by 1876 it had become known as Carter's Lane, named after a local resident. (James Carter's house in Dawson Street is no longer extant). In September 1915 the name of the street was changed to Dawson Street at the behest of its residents; the origin of the name 'Dawson' is unknown at this time (CCL Street Names Index).

Chester street, east.	
<i>Right hand side from east Town Belt.</i>	
Davidson, Mrs.	
Flavel, sen., Henry	
Flavel, jun., Henry	
McNeish, James	
Allard, Mrs.	
Goodman, James	
Mitchell, William	
Burn, Thomas	
Savage, John	
Nelson, William	
Macey, James	
Walker, William George	
Robison, Miss E. A.	
Gill, Lewis	
Treganze, Lewis	
Mazey, Charles	
	<i>Barbadoes street intersects.</i>
	<i>Oxford terrace intersects.</i>
	<i>Madras street intersects.</i>
	<i>Manchester street intersects.</i>
Fire Brigade station—W. Harris, captain	
	<i>Colombo street intersects.</i>
	<i>Victoria street intersects.</i>
	<i>Durham street intersects.</i>
Buckley, Alfred	
Quinn, Thomas	
Wood, Joseph	
	<i>Cranmer square.</i>
Chester street, east.	
<i>Left hand side from East Town Belt.</i>	
Caterer, Frederick	
McDonald, John	
Blyth, William	
Calvert, William	
Maed, P.	
Wiggins, Francis	
Walkden, Charles	
Dixon, John James	
Shoolbraid, James, storekeeper	
Thorn, James, butcher	
Harrington, Dennis	
Whitmore, Tamerlane Vitruvius	
Davis, Mrs.	
Ablett, John Webb	
Tanden, Mrs.	
Hill, William	
Hewitt, Walter	
Rankin, Mrs.	
	<i>Barbadoes street intersects.</i>
Seager, John	
Wason, Mrs. F.	
	<i>Madras street intersects.</i>

Residents of Chester Street East: *Wises's Post Office Directory*, 1878-1879.

Distinctive Physical Characteristics:

- Chester Street East conforms to the standard dimensions of the city's colonial grid pattern, while Dawson Street reflects the ad hoc development of a single Town Reserve from 1858 onwards.
- Dawson Street is of an intimate scale reflecting its origins as a private road.
- The style of dwellings varies according to their genesis as either working-class vernacular homes, crafted by builders into colonial cottages or modest villas, or middle-class houses and townhouses, which exhibit Italianate, bay, villa or bungalow stylings.
- The houses and townhouses within the area are one or two storeys in height; the latter are either townhouses or single-family homes largely concentrated at the western end of the area where they denote the higher socio-economic status of their original owner-occupiers.
- Timber and corrugated metal are the predominant building materials.
- Standard footpaths extend along both sides of Chester Street East; Dawson Street lacks footpaths but has concrete edged planters positioned along its length to calm traffic and offer pedestrian refuges at intervals.
- From the west end of Chester Street East can be seen the Edmonds Clock Tower (1929), the open space associated with the Ōtākaro Avon River and the urban environment of the central city. Street trees and berms along the length of Chester Street East create the sense of a suburban residential neighbourhood.
- The Chester Street East Reserve provides an open space recreational amenity where once stood a number of houses stood.



An aerial view of the area in 1940-44. Canterbury Maps.

The Significance of the Area to the Heritage of Christchurch:

The historic heritage significance of this area lies in its **historical and social** value as a place of mixed-class residence that dates from the earliest years of colonial Christchurch. **Cultural** values are associated with the proximity of the area to the Ōtākaro Avon River and the kāinga of Ōtautahi, as well as the changing demographics of the area since the European settlement of Christchurch. The area's **architectural and aesthetic** value resides in its housing designs and typologies, which date predominantly from c.1860 until the 1920s. The **craftsmanship** value of the houses is generally typical of the period in which they were built. **Contextual** values relate to the area's inner-city setting and mix of streetscape environment. **Archaeological** values may arise from the area's proximity to Ōtautahi and to the residential development that has occurred within the area since the later 1850s.

Historical/Social

The historic value of this area arises from its demonstration of the colonial settlement of central Christchurch, the mix of people who contributed to the development of the city and the ongoing social patterns associated with a range of housing typologies.

The class and social status of some of the area's early residents, including Colonel James de Renzie Brett (died 1889, 110 Chester Street East) and the lawyer James Cassidy (died 1920, 106 Chester Street East), can be discerned from the obituaries they received in contemporary newspapers. Equally the less well-to-do men and women who lived and worked in Chester Street East and Dawson Street in the late 19th and early 20th centuries contributed their labour to the city as builders, warehousemen and labourers. The age and housing types in the area attest to the close proximity in which members of different social groups lived in early Christchurch.



Plaques on the wall outside 86 Chester Street East. Dr A McEwan, July 2021.

Cultural/Spiritual

The cultural value of the area is derived from its proximity to the nearby river and kāinga site, which have a high level of significance to mana whenua, and for its demonstration of the way of life of the people who have lived in the area since the mid-19th century. The esteem in which the 'Chesterfields' neighbourhood is held by members of the community can be seen in the heritage recognition of the surviving Widdowson townhouses and the community's sense of identity.²

² <https://ccc.govt.nz/culture-and-community/central-city-christchurch/live-here/our-central-neighbourhoods/chester-east-neighbourhood>



'Chester Cottage' (c.1860?). A McEwan, July 2021.

Architectural/Aesthetic

The houses within this area have aesthetic values related to their style and typology, which provide a visual chronology of working and middle-class residential development from the 1860s until the present day. A small number of architects appear to have been involved in the design of houses within the area, including architect/developer William Widdowson (86-88 & 98-100 Chester Street East, early 1890s).

The England Brothers, one of the city's most well-known turn of the 20th century architectural practises, may have designed the house at 87 Chester Street East and the houses at 107 (c.1895?) and 109 (c.1899?) Chester Street East was likely designed by former City Surveyor, Cornelius Cuff. The style and detailing of other later 19th and early 20th century houses in the area demonstrate the skills and capacity of the city's builders at the time.

Technological / Craftsmanship

The craftsmanship of the houses in this area is generally typical of the period in which they were built. The majority of the houses in the area are constructed from timber, for framing and weatherboard cladding, and corrugated metal; these being the conventional materials of New Zealand vernacular housing since the beginning of colonial settlement.

Contextual

The contextual value of the Heritage Area arises from the development pattern created by Chester Street East and Dawson Street. Mature trees, garden plantings and boundary fencing help to create the residential character of the area, which has accommodated townhouse developments for over 120 years. The Chester Street East Reserve is a modern council reserve that provides an open space amenity to local residents and visitors to the area. The intimate scale of Dawson Street makes a distinctive contribution to visual character of the city.

Archaeological

Multiple archaeological values, pertaining to Maori settlement and food gathering at Ōtautahi and colonial residential development since the 1850s, may be revealed within this area.

Principal References

'Christchurch Street and Place Names', available at <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/>

John Cookson & Graeme Dunstall (eds) *Southern Capital Christchurch – Towards a City Biography 1850-2000* (CUP, 2000)

John Wilson et al *Christchurch Contextual Historical Overview* (June 2005)

Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu *Kā Huru Manu* available at <https://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas>
<https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/1881>
<https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7323>

REPORT COMPLETED

31 August 2021 / revised 12 May 2025

AUTHOR

Dr Ann McEwan / Heritage Consultancy Services

Schedule of Individual Items Included in the HA

<i>Name of Building / Structure / Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>HNZPT List Entry</i>	<i>Contribution to Heritage Area</i>
Townhouses	86-88 Chester Street East	Yes List entry # 1881	Defining [Scheduled item # 113]
House	87 Chester Street East		Defining
House	89 Chester Street East		Neutral
Townhouse	90A/90B Chester Street East		Contributory
Fire station site [part thereof]	91 Chester Street		Intrusive
Electricity substation	91E Chester Street East		Neutral
Townhouse	92 Chester Street East		Contributory
Vacant site	94 Chester Street		Intrusive
Vacant site	96 Chester Street		Intrusive
Townhouses	98-100 Chester Street East	Yes List entry # 7323	Defining [Scheduled item # 116]
Vacant site	102 Chester Street / 294 Madras Street		Intrusive
House	106 Chester Street East		Defining
House	107 Chester Street East		Defining
House	109 Chester Street East		Defining
House	110 Chester Street East		Defining
House	111/113 Chester Street East		Contributory
House	114 Chester Street East		Defining
Townhouses	1-5/115 Chester Street East		Neutral
House	116 Chester Street East		Defining
House	118 Chester Street East		Defining
Townhouses	119/119 A-D Chester Street East		Neutral
Townhouses	1-6/120 Chester Street East		Neutral
Townhouses	1-2/123 Chester Street East		Neutral
House	124 Chester Street East		Contributory
House	125 Chester Street East		Contributory
House	126 Chester Street East		Contributory
House	128 Chester Street East		Contributory
House	129 Chester Street East		Neutral
House	130 Chester Street East		Contributory
House	131 Chester Street East		Defining

House	133 Chester Street East		Defining
Townhouses	1-8/137 Chester Street East		Neutral
'Chester Cottage'	139 Chester Street East		Defining
Townhouses	1-7/140 Chester Street East		Neutral
House	141 Chester Street East		Defining
Townhouse	1/142 Chester Street East		Neutral
House	144 Chester Street East		Defining
House	145 Chester Street East		Defining
House	147 Chester Street East		Defining
House	148 Chester Street East		Defining
Flats	1-6/150 Chester Street East		Neutral
House	154 Chester Street East		Defining
Chester Street East Reserve	160 Chester Street East		Neutral
House	6 Dawson Street		Defining
Flats	1-3/7 Dawson Street		Neutral
Townhouses	8/10/12 Dawson Street		Neutral
House	11 Dawson Street		Contributory
House	13 Dawson Street		Contributory
House	250 Kilmore Street		Defining [Scheduled item # 319]
Flats	254 Kilmore Street		Neutral

Key for Contribution to HA

Defining

Buildings, structures and other features that establish the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Defining buildings, structures and features embody the heritage values of the area and retain a level of authenticity and integrity sufficient to demonstrate these values.

* Any building or structure that is individually scheduled within Appendix 9.3.7.2 of the Christchurch District Plan is deemed, regardless of its group ranking, to be making a defining contribution to the historic heritage values of the area.

Contributory

Buildings, structures and other features that support the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Contributory buildings, structures and features are consistent with the heritage values of the area and may be either modified or modern buildings, structures and features in sympathy with the design and typology of their neighbours.

Neutral

Buildings, structures and other features that neither establish, support nor detract from the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Neutral buildings, structures and features may be modern buildings that introduce a new typology (for example a cluster of flats or townhouses) or a new pattern of land development (such as cross-leasing); they generally respect the overall scale and density of the area.

Intrusive

Buildings, structures and other features that detract from the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Intrusive buildings, structures and features are developments and typologies that are inconsistent with the historic heritage values of the area, including, but not limited to, non-residential uses and/or high-rise buildings. Vacant lots, from which buildings have been demolished or removed, are also considered intrusive within the streetscape of the Heritage Area.

Context Record Form

Chester Street East and Dawson Street Record Form

Area/Element Description

Chester Street East is the eastern portion of roadway that runs on an east-west axis through the city centre; at its mid-point the street is interrupted by Victoria Square and Ōtākaro Avon River. Dawson Street runs perpendicular to Chester Street East, linking it with Kilmore Street.

Contributing landscapes

Ōtākaro Avon River

Street and block pattern

Grid

Section layouts

Variable section size.

Key Long views

N/A






Key Short views




Open space of Ōtākaro Avon River from the west end of Chester Street East.

Contextual Significance

The private development of Dawson Street through the block bounded by Kilmore Street, Chester Street East, Barbadoes Street and Fitzgerald Avenue is notable, as is overall integrity of the streetscape that has been maintained within this part of the central city.

Inventory of Public Realm Features

Feature	Description	
Open space	Chester Street East Reserve (Rating: Neutral)	
Streams	N/A	
Cemetery	N/A	
Landmarks	N/A	
Memorials	N/A	
Plaques	N/A	
Gates/pillars	Variety of domestic gates and pillars (Rating: Contributory)	  
Paths	N/A	
Structures	N/A	
Fences	Variety of fences (Rating: Contributory)	As above
Walls	Brick and masonry walls (Rating: Neutral)	
Wharfs/piers	N/A	
Steps	N/A	
Seats	N/A	
Signs	N/A	

Lighting	Fabricated steel arm ococlyte (Rating: Neutral)		
Materials	N/A		
Colours	N/A		
Street	Chester Street East – two lanes with traffic calming measures, angled parking, footpaths, berms and street trees (Rating: Contributory) Dawson Street – single lane with concrete planters, parking spaces (Rating: Defining)	 	
Street trees	Planted along Chester Street East (Rating: Contributory)		
Building setback	Irregular (Rating: Contributory)		
Ancillary buildings	Garages predominantly at the rear of sites (Rating: Neutral)		
Trees	Variety of exotic and native trees (Rating: Contributory)		
Vegetation	Mixed vegetation (Rating: Contributory)		
Views	To west towards river environment and city centre (Rating: Neutral)		

Appendix 1

Individual site record forms