

IHP Presentation

Who am I?

My name is Susan Wall and I have owned and lived in at 24 Carrington Street since September 2005, 18 years.

I have lived in Christchurch for most of my life I and love this city. I am here by myself today, as a lay person, as I do not have the money for resources such as an RMA lawyer or a planner. I have no knowledge of the RMA or council procedures **like most Christchurch residents**, or New Zealanders for that matter. I almost cancelled when I discovered that these hearings are live streamed but decided that I really must at least try as I have nothing to lose.

How did I get here?

My home was significantly damaged in the Canterbury earthquakes 2011/2012 and it wasn't until 2017 that my insurer settled my claim (after 3 attempts over 5 years). I believe it should have been a rebuild, but I ran out of steam, could fight no longer, so I settled. My home is on TC3 land in an IFV zone so I want to build a solid, long lasting, healthy family home for life in the 21st century and beyond.

I started the rebuild process in 2018 but was disillusioned by the pre-application meeting with the council and put my plans on hold. I had realized that next time I will have to use an architect and a planner (a lot of additional expense) and not just an architectural design service employed by my chosen building company.

I have been very excited by the new dwellings that have been built in our area in the last couple of years and how **well they fit** into our character area. These new homes motivated me to restart my rebuild back in March this year.

In late March I phoned the council to ask a few questions about boundaries, setbacks and the position of a possible historical drain that may run across the rear of my property before I was to start the planning of my new home. I was told that I may not be allowed to demolish and rebuild to which I replied something like "I have to as my home is not fit for purpose". As I recall, my call was transferred to a different department and I was advised that there has just been a plan change and my area, the Church Property Trustees North Saint Albans subdivision they called it (I had never heard our area called that), is now a **Residential Heritage Area** with immediate effect. This meant I will need a resource consent to demolish, a step not required under the Character Area Overlay. The council person followed up with an email that also advised me that my property was classified as "defining".

I was absolutely shocked by this information and asked why I had not heard of this and was told that I received a letter. I did not receive any letter from the council advising that Residential Heritage Area designation has been added on top of our Character Area Overlay or that it was even coming. I would have expected that someone from the council would have contacted me and all property owners **directly** to advise of the proposed additional designation and all the changes involved and how they will affect us as property owners, well before this.

The council person also recommended that I have my say by clicking on the “have your say” and I did this but could not understand any of it or find my way to exactly what changes have taken place and how they will affect me. I had several attempts to pick my way through it but found it so very confusing, impossible actually. When I went back to try again the submissions had closed and I had missed my opportunity.

I was then advised to make a further submission once that avenue was open and so I did spend a lot of time on many occasions during that short window trying to work out how to go about a “further submission”. I rang Jan West for help and I went into the council twice to get help, the first time to ask for a paper copy of all submissions as I thought this would be easier to work with. After a long wait, a nice young man came down and said that I would have to pay for the copying and it was an extremely large document. I was thinking that it was simply a list of submissions, 15-20 pages at most probably less, so I abandoned that. The second time I asked for paper forms to complete further submissions as I thought this might be easier to understand and actually make one. Paper forms were not available and I asked the young lady to please get someone to email her a form and she could print a few copies out for me, not possible. I thought I had read somewhere that they were available at the council.

The whole process of submitting is difficult and complicated and I think that many people would not even begin try. It would be interesting to know how many individuals made submissions or further submissions on this plan change.

The council system did not accept all my further submissions and I could not work out why. BUT it seems I did manage to make some further submissions electronically as I received confirmation emails, and that is why I am here today.

I have had to engage a planner to draw up and make my application for resource consent to demolish which took much more time than I expected:

I was very surprised to be invoiced \$1640.55 by the council for the information given to the planner in a “telephone preapplication meeting”. Information I feel should have been supplied without charge as it was required due to the new Residential Heritage Area plan change.

What a process!

Application for resource consent to demolish was finally lodged 24 July 2023

Where am I now?

After paying a \$2000 fee, my application was allocated to a council planner 15 August 2023 and he has said that it should be **notified** and that a **\$10,000 deposit is required for the process to begin.**

My application is currently on hold as I am hopeful that the change of government and or the IHP process may see the council drop the new RHA’s and/or grant my application without the long and costly process of notifying. Also I do not have \$10,000+ to fund the notification process with no guarantee that my application will be granted.

I keep hearing in the media that councils are making the consent process easier but it is a very complicated and expensive process from my experience.

In preparation for today I have tried to read and understand some of the RMA. I have found this extremely difficult to read, let alone understand any of it.

Many of us know that there is a plan change coming in 2024 but it is the MDRS that has been in the media and residents in our area know that the Character Area Overlay rules and restrictions do not allow infill housing, townhouse developments or multi unit developments in our streets.

As I spoke with neighbors, I became increasingly aware that I am not the only one who did not know of the new RHA designation and anything associated with it.

So I decided to do a survey.

SURVEY – 60 Home owners, 49 Homes

I visited more than 70 homes, many more than once, but people were often not home, it is a busy life. Only one person would not come to the door to answer my questions as he sent his teenage son to advise me.

Q 1 How long have you owned this property?

1-4 Years 11 5-9 Years 12 10-19 Years 19 20+ Years 18 (incl 43Y, 46Y, 55Y)

Q 2 Are you aware that our area (Church Properties Trustees (CPT) – North Saint Albans) is now a new **RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE AREA** with immediate effect in March 2023?

Yes 9 No 49 Not Sure 2

Yes...4 x work associated with council and/or building industry

Yes...4 x recall seeing a headline somewhere at some stage

Q 3 Did you know this was going to happen before this new RHA designation came into **immediate effect**?

Yes 5 No 52 Not Sure 3

Yes...4 x work associated with council and/or building industry

Q 4 Do you know what changes are involved and how they affect you as a property owner?

Yes 4 No 56

Yes...3 x work associated with council and/or building industry

Q 5 Do you know the RHA designation is effectively another set of restrictions on top of the CAO rules?

Yes 3 No 57

Yes...2 x work associated with council and/or building industry

Q 6 Do you think the **Christchurch City Council** should have contacted you (and all property owners involved) **directly** to communicate/discuss any changes and how they will affect the property owners before even considering making this change?

Yes 59 No 1

No...1 x knows council processes and how it all works

Q 7 Do you think the Christchurch City Council should have the power to make changes such as this, with “immediate effect”, having **NOT** consulted directly with affected property owners in the discussion phase?

Yes 1 No 57 Not sure 2

Yes...1 x knows council processes and how it all works

Q 8 Do you agree that our area should be a designated Residential Heritage Area (RHA)?

Yes 2 No 28 Don't Know or couldn't answer 30

Yes...1 x work associated with council and/or building industry

Q 9 Do you think that we should retain the **Character Area Overlay** status?

Yes 59 Not applicable x 1...Lives in Rutland Street so not applicable

Comments from survey participants

Unhappy about the new RHA, did not know that it had happened or that it was coming. I would like more freedom to be a bit creative.

Character Area Overlay – Great concept and appropriate for our area

I do **not** believe the council should have the power to make changes with immediate effect. The proposed changes should have gone through a hearings process first and submissions heard before having legal effect.

Character Area Overlay – I believe that these rules are appropriate to retain the character, residential density and built form of our area.

All of the houses in our area will have to be rebuilt at some stage as many have significant deterioration, are not in good shape and they are not built with permanent materials.

I am extremely unhappy with council processes and charges and all that it took to get my resource consent.

How is this democratic?

I knew the RHA came into affect earlier in the year, I knew it was coming and I am happy with RHA. I know about council processes and how it all works.

Other Points to make

The North East side of Roosevelt Avenue (between Malvern and Westminster streets) is Residential Character and the opposite side of the street is Residential Heritage as well as Residential Character. Where is the fairness and consistency in that?

The North East side of Rutland Street (between Malvern and Westminster streets) is Residential Heritage and not Residential Character and the other side of the street is MDRZ

I am here today to:

- 1 Oppose the new RHA areas in Christchurch

I believe that the Character Area Overlay rules suit our area very well and have done for many years. The new RHA status imposed with immediate effect March 2023 is unnecessary, unfair and far too restricting. This new RHA status devalues our homes and makes repairs, renovations and rebuilding more costly, difficult and possibly impossible.

- 2 Oppose the classification of homes in the RHA's (CPT North St Albans)

How can the council possibly know what state a house is in by just downloading an image from google maps and then classifying it as defining?

- 3 Object to the council having the power to make changes with **immediate effect**.

Clearly I don't know about council processes but how is this even possible? How is it democratic?

- 4 **Draw attention to and object to** the way in which the Christchurch City Council communicate changes and proposed changes to the people of Christchurch in particular the residents most affected by these changes, the lay people, the people who are "not in the know".

I believe that the results of the submissions process are not a true reflection of what the people of Christchurch think or might think if they knew of the plan changes and what it means for them. This process is just too complicated and unattainable for many.

I believe the council should be duty bound to **do their very best** to ensure that those of us who don't have an affiliation with a residents or neighborhood association or have ties with the building industry in some way, are included in the discussion process prior to introducing any changes that will have a major impact on our lives and finances.

As I have already pointed out, I am a lay person and I, **like most others in my area**, was totally unaware of this new RHA designation until I contacted the Christchurch City Council for information regarding rebuilding my earthquake damaged home and then it was too late. **I feel let down and defeated by our council and their processes.**

You may be thinking that this is all just emotion and you are somewhat right. Our homes are the center of our family life, we raise our children here, we build our lives here and we have our life savings invested here. We need to know what is going on and be able to have our say before **any** changes have legal effect.