



# Facing

Newsletter of Beacon Pathway November 2012



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## Real People, Real Buildings, Real Data

### Jeremy Harrall speaking programme

Beacon, together with Hikurangi Foundation and the British Council, have brought Dr Harrall to New Zealand to deliver a programme of events focusing on SEArch's development solutions: **'Real people, real buildings, real data'**.

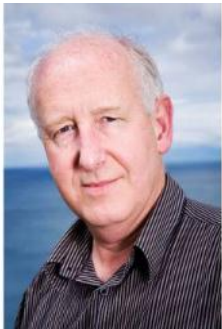
Jeremy Harrall is the Managing Director of SEArch (Sustainable Ecological Architecture), a RIBA Chartered Practice.

#### *The programme*

<b>13 November</b> <b>10am-12pm</b>	Seminar for housing providers and planners: Influencing change to improve housing	Wellington City Council. For more information, contact <a href="mailto:vickic@beaconpathway.co.nz">vickic@beaconpathway.co.nz</a>
<b>13 November</b> <b>6pm-7.00pm</b>	Public lecture: Real people, real buildings, real data	Victoria University of Wellington, School of Architecture, 139 Vivian St, Wellington. For more information, contact the School.
<b>14 November</b> <b>3pm-5pm</b>	Public lecture: Building community and resilience through sustainable design	Clean Tech Centre, Otaki. For more information, contact the Centre.
<b>15 November</b> <b>12.15pm-1.30pm</b>	Public seminar: Real people, real buildings, real data	Auckland University, Lecture Theatre 206-220, Arts 1 Building (Entry from Level Two next to Lecture Theatre), 14 Symonds St, Auckland. Book here: <a href="http://drjeremyharrall.eventbrite.co.nz/">http://drjeremyharrall.eventbrite.co.nz/</a>

SEArch focuses on environmentally responsible architecture with a light touch on the planet, providing low energy living. SEArch designs buildings that are naturally heated, naturally ventilated and have reduced to a minimum, their reliance on fossil fuels.

Jeremy will share his experiences and insights on retrofitting and designing high-performance housing and commercial buildings, and discuss how he's used data to shift the policy debate and public awareness in the UK. He will explore how sustainable design can provide the basis for social, environmental and economic benefit, and lead to new enterprise opportunities.



## Message from the CEO

Exciting things have been happening in Christchurch!

This month the competition to design a new inner city neighbourhood for Christchurch was launched. Entitled Breathe, it is a fantastic opportunity for urban designers, architects and architectural designers, landscape architects, quantity surveyors and engineers to join together and come up with an inspirational and innovative design that can contribute to a bold and visionary rebuild.

I feel like a proud father when it comes to Breathe and the New Urban Village! Back in 2011 Beacon was part of the discussions that formed the genesis of the housing showcase concept in Christchurch. Tony Moore (Christchurch City Council), Duncan Joiner (Department of Building and Housing), Jasper van der Lingen (local branch chair of NZIA, and Neil Challenger (local branch chair of NZILA) hatched the idea of stimulating change by showing how medium density can be designed well.

Christchurch City Council floated the concept in their draft Central City Plan and we are delighted that CCDU picked it up as part of the Blueprint for central Christchurch.

Now the competition is underway. I encourage you to form teams and enter. The competition can only benefit from a wide breadth of ideas and innovation. We look forward to seeing what the Breathe teams come up with.

Meanwhile, Breathe international judge Kevin McCloud has also been thinking about the possibilities for Christchurch in the future. For those of you who haven't come across Kevin, he's probably best known as the presenter of the TV series *Grand Designs*. However, he has also established a sustainable housing development company called Hab (Happiness Architecture Beauty). In partnership with GreenSquare, Hab has undertaken several sustainable development

projects. I had the pleasure of visiting one of these, The Triangle, earlier this year. It was unique in its approach in building a strong community through early consultation, support for the residents' association, and provision of communal gardens, fruit trees, hot houses and cars.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Kevin McCloud. His extensive knowledge, of city-scale redevelopments across Europe, right through to neighbourhoods and community exemplars, provided significant food for thought.

In preparing himself for the competition, Kevin spent some time reading the Central City Recovery Plan, alongside the original Christchurch City Council CBD plan and background on Maori urban design and papakāinga housing. In his eyes there were elements missing – most notably "a serious dose of people power". As Kevin says, "The path to achieving the very best possible is to involve the people who will populate the place and make it their own... [this] is not just about consultation but involves residents and key non-professional and cultural stakeholders in every step of the design process. While this is a difficult concept, true social sustainability happens through sharing".

In an open letter to Christchurch (see page 4), Kevin talks about the community's role in leading the redesign, and about what else the plan needs to make it a world leader.

I fully agree with Kevin that Christchurch has a unique opportunity to position itself at the forefront of excellent urban development.

Christchurch can show the world how to design and build for a vibrant city, with good quality medium density housing mixed in with other uses, and with houses and neighbourhoods which are resource efficient, make the most of renewable energy, reuse water, are healthy and comfortable for residents, and are adaptable into the future.

This is a great time to think outside the square to a solution that meets Christchurch's needs now and into the future. I'm hoping the Breathe entrants can show us the way.

*Nick Collins*

## New Urban Village and the Breathe competition

### Designs for Christchurch's inner city

Christchurch City Council, Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment and Ngāi Tahu are hosting an international competition to design and build a new neighbourhood in the Central City.

The winning design will be built on a site on the corner of Madras and Gloucester streets. As an exemplar of quality sustainable inner city design, it could re-launch Christchurch's Central City as one of the most desirable living places in New Zealand - inspiring prospective residents and developers to be part of the new city.

Successful designs will be:

- Viable – developments must be economically feasible and contribute to the economic vitality of the local area and region.
- Affordable – affordable for average Christchurch residents to rent or own as well as to operate and maintain (i.e. 'whole of life' costs).
- Liveable – meeting current and future Christchurch and 'Kiwi' lifestyle needs, and fostering strong community connections through a balance of private and public spaces that also enhance the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Sustainable – resource-efficient and potentially self-sufficient (e.g. energy, water and waste minimisation), supporting biodiversity, and promoting education/outreach and wider city regeneration opportunities.
- Adaptable and resilient – promoting excellence in earthquake-resilient, healthy, safe design that is adaptable for current and future needs and resilient for generations to come.
- Place making – the form and function of the development is well connected to, and enhances, the local context and provides a strong identity and sense of place.

- Innovation – utilising the best of available ideas to deliver exceptional 21st century inner city living.

### Forming teams

Teams will need to incorporate a range of professionals with the experience and skills needed to not only create an inspiring idea but see it through to completion.

Teams also need a developer on board for Stage 1 and at least one of the team members must be based in Canterbury, New Zealand for Stage 2.

### Competition stages

This is a two stage competition -

Stage 1: concept design, 15 October -15 January 2013

Stage 2: developed design and financial competition, March - May 2013.

The overall winning team will work with a developer build their neighbourhood in the Central City.

### Register now

Register your interest today at:

[www.newurbanvillage.co.nz](http://www.newurbanvillage.co.nz)



## Kevin McCloud's Open letter to Christchurch

Rebuilding Christchurch brings an opportunity most cities never get: to breathe new life into the Central City, to recreate Christchurch as a world leading exemplar of sustainable, modern living. Since I was brought on board as a judge in the upcoming Breathe design competition, I've been carefully following plans for the city's redevelopment and the resulting conversations it has sparked.

In this open letter to Christchurch, I'd like to offer my perspective on the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan. In particular, I'd like to address Rod Oram's concern (Press opinion 5 August 2012) that "Nothing in the plan distinguishes Christchurch from the pack."

### So what's missing? People power

When you look around other world leading cities, there are a few things not fully explored in the Central Recovery Plan, the most important of which is a serious dose of people power. The Plan is ambitious but, given human nature and the natural course of events, the resulting rebuilt city will inevitably have several degrees of compromise built into it. The path to achieving the very best possible is to involve the people who will populate the place and make it their own and to help them evince an even more powerful ambition.

I recently read *Tāone Tupu Ora*, a New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities publication edited by Keriata Stuart and Michelle Thompson-Fawcett. This book brings together themes of indigenous knowledge, Māori urban design principles, micro-urbanism, the development of Māori land, papakāinga and puts together a case for why and how mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge) can be part of better urban development. I was struck at the similarity in approach of the Māori urban design principles for papakāinga development and some of the principles of One Planet Living (as developed by World Wildlife Fund and BioRegional), for example, Health and Happiness, Culture and Community, and Land Use and Wildlife. One Planet Living is an acceptable, proven and westernised set

of guiding principles towards sustainability - even the London Olympics adopted it into their sustainability strategy.

However, One Planet Living does not set out a route to achieve its objectives. So colleagues of mine have worked with the British government to establish guidelines for inclusive design consultation that have eventually made their way into a very progressive and new National Planning Policy Framework. The table of Māori principles has the potential to amplify and enrich that process of consultation and I believe it could form a matrix for Canterbury's public consultation processes that might lead projects towards One Planet Living objectives or something even richer: a sustainability roadmap unique to Christchurch.

I'm particularly concerned to see the following phrase in the Central Recovery Plan:

*"Except in relation to urban design matters in the Core, the Christchurch City Council will continue as central Christchurch's principal planning authority.."*

This suggests an over-arching hidden hand controlling design and development in the Core. So it also suggests emasculation of any local say or community involvement at a time when community consultation and empowerment in the implementation of the Plan could produce a truly rounded and properly sustainable outcome. I appreciate that the Central Recovery Plan incorporates a huge amount of existing consultation but, here in the UK, we are moving towards an inclusive design process that is not just about consultation but involves residents and key non-professional and cultural stakeholders in every step of the design process. While this is a difficult concept, true social sustainability happens through sharing.

### Sustainable food

Food gets a mention in the Central Recovery Plan, but there is little mention of how the city might accommodate food growing within its confines, or how local food networks might operate or be plugged into the city's transport strategy. In my company Hab's developments, we're focussing on fruity streets, edible hedgerows, orchard car parks

and even green, food-producing perimeter fencing! Is there capacity in the Plan for this and for shared food growing in community greenhouses, polytunnels and kitchen gardens? An urban farm – or at least larger food growing areas in public parks – will be an essential part of any resilient city of the future and will help re-establish connection with place, natural resources and locally distinctive and viable food products and crops.

## **Sustainable energy and transport**

It's good to see the suggestion of independent energy production and I believe the Christchurch Agency for Energy has an important role to play in demonstrating how energy production could be different. However, in a sustainability plan, you'd expect to see a proposal for the way energy production plugs into the surrounding landscape and resources, be they biomass, wind, wave, solar or tidal. Energy crop production has a particularly complementary role to local and regional food production, so the Plan should address how that dynamic could be balanced.

Transport is also touched on but not ambitiously explored. There is no mention of trams and little on reducing car use. Christchurch is a flat city in which bicycle use could be revolutionary. Car clubs, car sharing, bike clubs and electric bike clubs might become the norm. The river might not simply become a bike and pedestrian route but also a busy piece of waterway infrastructure bringing food into the city and removing its waste out to the surrounding productive landscape. How much of the city centre might be pedestrianised and how much of its public realm organised as 'shared space' between all users? As an example of what can be done, the city of Freiburg in Germany has produced its own Charter for Sustainable Urbanism which sets out twelve principles for 'sustainable urbanism', drawing together ideas of diversity, tolerance, walkability, good public transport, high quality design and more.

One of the least attractive words that keeps popping up in the CRP is zoning. Clearly there needs to be organisation and clustering of activities to some degree, and the idea of the city centre is essential. However, it is possible to produce the same clustering results by organising the architecture

and the public realm hierarchically, with different building heights and massing for different areas. This, of course, results in some bleeding: residents move into buildings designed primarily for offices and vice-versa; people build houses in between the low-rise offices; artisans and shop owners live above their work-place. Of course all this is absolutely desirable - it's what makes Shoreditch in London or central Paris or the CBD of Melbourne energetic and vibrant places. It's all down to the accidental, the seeding of places with lots of mixed uses and the creation of the connective tissue of sustainability. The problem with zoning is that it so often works as a straightjacket. And it's another reason why local say and community involvement are so important.

## **Zero carbon and zero waste**

Finally, what of other One Planet Living objectives such as zero carbon and zero waste? Could Christchurch become a zero carbon and zero waste city by 2050? Freiburg has set a target of cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 40% by 2030, and being climate neutral by 2050. Malmo (Sweden) is aiming to be powered by 100% renewable energy by the year 2030 and boast the first carbon neutral neighbourhood in Europe. BedZED (UK) is a large-scale carbon neutral or zero fossil energy development, aiming to meet all its energy demands from renewable energy generated on site. Could Christchurch become another such exemplar of 21st century sustainability? That would certainly attract the world's attention to Christchurch and turn the Central Recovery Plan into a true vision for the future.

My hope is that you, the people who live in and love Christchurch, are able to find the voice to explore and drive through the best possible ideas. And, in so doing, perhaps it'll be possible to convey to the world a story and a setting for one of the most exciting urban design projects of the 21st century.

*Kevin McCloud*

## Reporting on Beacon's 2012 Symposia Series

### Thanks to all who came along

Our three symposia, in Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington, proved a great success. Thank you to everyone who came along for stepping up and contributing to the discussions on how to address New Zealand's housing challenges.

The presentations are now available on Beacon's website:

[www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/2012\\_beacon\\_symposia](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/2012_beacon_symposia)

We have also been busy collating the ideas from the soapbox and panel discussions: these outcome documents are posted on Beacon's website. There were some fantastic ideas brought along – we like the one about a version of The Block where contestants are judged on how well they improve the performance of a house!

Some ideas are ones that Beacon will pick up as part of our programme. Some we need help with!

Here's what we are doing:

1. We are developing a 'fact bank' on rental housing. We want to understand all the issues, clarify the problem and hopefully define a clear pathway forward. Watch this space!
2. We are putting the outcomes in front of the relevant people to see if we can get some action. We are talking to colleagues in Building and Housing Group (in MBIE) about the potential for central government roles and we are taking location-specific ideas and concepts to CERA and the Canterbury councils and Auckland Council.
3. We are exploring demonstration opportunities with our existing network: could there be an Auckland Housing Showcase, a neighbourhood demonstration, alternative housing typologies demonstrated in brown-fields sites in Christchurch?

Here's what we need your help with:

1. Getting clear simple home performance information out to New Zealand residents. Do you have a newsletter, a blog, a magazine you use to push out information to the public? We could provide you with articles, guides, tools as part of our ongoing communications plan. Get in touch!
2. The Wellington panel raised the need for a retirement strategy for our housing stock; is the continual piecemeal upgrade of homes in poor condition sensible, or should we demolish and rebuild better? We haven't actively considered a demolition strategy and could do with your help. Do you have knowledge, information, access to overseas experience? We'd like to hear it – send it in.
3. We are interested in ideas for demonstration projects. You should know that Beacon doesn't have funding for such projects – we work to develop a network of stakeholders, hopefully secure the funding, scope the outcomes and evaluation and implement. Our drive is changing the way homes and neighbourhoods are built or renovated to improve outcomes for New Zealanders. Let us know if something in your portfolio might align with goal.

Contact us at [office@beaconpathway.co.nz](mailto:office@beaconpathway.co.nz) if you can help.



*Christchurch audience members vote on the best soapbox ideas*

## Build Back Smarter

### First upgrade complete

The upgrade of the first house, Huntsbury 2, is now complete.

Fitting in the upgrades with the earthquake repairs proved fairly easy, and the upgrades had good support from the builder engaged to work on this property. The homeowners are happy with their 'new' improved home.

The team are planning an evaluative case study of Huntsbury 2 looking at how well the process worked at each point (insurer, PMO, builder, insurance installer, homeowner), a cost benefit analysis, and the outcomes for the homeowners.

### See the video

Verney Ryan has made a video about Build Back Smarter based on the Huntsbury 2 experience.

This can be viewed at

<http://uoutu.be/0rh-hLaFDoo>

### Two more homes recruited

Two more homes have been recruited for Build Back Smarter, both with IAG/Hawkins.

Redcliffs 1 is 1950s brick and tile house with substantial cladding damage.



Earthquake repairs are already in for a building consent which has enabled Beacon to move quickly. Bill King is currently ready to take the scope to the PMO and the builder to get pricing.

Mt Pleasant 1 is a 1920s bungalow with substantial addition. All internal wall and ceiling linings have to be replaced as the house will be re-roofed.



Sub-floor piles and concrete floor slabs of the home, originally built in 1918 and then twice renovated in recent years, have to be repaired.

The upgrade scope is ready to go to the PMO and builder for pricing.

## Southland Energy Conference

Beacon recently provided several speakers for Venture Southland's Energy Conference. The theme of the conference was "Advancing Energised Buildings."

Nick Collins spoke on 'Local Government's Role in Sustainable Housing' while Lois Easton spoke on 'Other Regions' Initiatives'. Verney Ryan spoke on 'Identifying Barriers and Priority Areas for Sustainable Building in Southland' and 'Design Specifications for the Future'.

These presentations can be downloaded from:

[www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/conference\\_papers](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/conference_papers)