

PROJECT: GISBORNE CIVIC SQUARE PROJECT



CLIENT: GISBORNE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STATUS: At this stage the development concepts drafted by EELA capture a vision for a public gathering space for this selected site; however this site is one of several possible locations for an urban gathering space.

SITE PHOTO:



THE BRIEF [CONT'D]

However, with a lack of civic space, Heart of Gisborne suggests that three major issues are arising.....

- Highly successful footpath-based events are in danger of becoming victims of their own success as increasing numbers visit the city centre to participate – blocking footpaths and access to stores. Both the business community and community at large are reluctant to let these types of events die but if they are to continue to grow attention needs to be placed on housing these vents in a more appropriate space.
- A large proportion of Heart of Gisborne's events budget – which is 100% rate payer funded – goes directly into the closing of streets to house events such as the Wine and Food Festival Street party. There is a desire to see more events in this vein happen, however the costs are prohibitive. Between different organisations it is estimated that approximately \$10,000 per annum is spent closing streets and hiring equipment to run events in the street space.
- Community groups do not have easy access to the city centre to hold events, demonstrations or open days. Many groups find the cost of closing streets to create appropriate space prohibitive and therefore choose not to utilize the city centre.

Heart of Gisborne's vision is for a multi-purpose civic space: one that is both a functional, casual gathering space that can be easily converted into an events space as needed. They say:

'The space must be sunny, situated centrally on the main street, creating a focal point for the city centre – a heart of the city from which everything else extends.

This would create not only a centrally located gathering space where people can meet on a daily basis but an events hub'.

EELA DESIGN PROCESS

EELA undertook a broad urban form, vehicle circulation and street character analysis in order to complete the project. Existing amenity (toilets, car parks, linkages, current uses) were identified as well as local heritage built character. The urban square would be required to hold up to 3,000 people and create strong linkages to Gladstone Road and Treble Court as well as the city library. The theme of 'Landscapes that Speak' was chosen for the proposed urban square based on its proximity to the city library. Inspiration for sculptural works and detailed design elements would draw on rich local oral and written traditions.

"Memories rise in the still air, like smoke from many fires, yet the stream still runs and the sun rides over the sky and the mountains are always there. You were the sky and the sky was always there. The sky does not grow old".

Tangi by Witi Ihimaera

Two concepts were developed: the first based on building removal adjoining Gladstone Road and the second based on the status quo; both were to involve partial road closure.



PEER REVIEW

Two peer review processes were undertaken during the drafting of these concepts: one by Rau Hoskings [Tribe Architects] using the Te Aranga Maori Cultural Landscape Strategy and the other by the GDC Policy Planner using the Ministry of the Environment's Urban Design Protocol.

