



# Newsletter

**NOVEMBER 2025**

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## **CIVIC TRUST AWARDS 2025**

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**The New Court Theatre**

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This year is the 46<sup>th</sup> that the Christchurch Civic Trust has acknowledged built and environmental projects in the community worthy of recognition. In total, since 1977, 11 Supreme Awards, 215 awards and 112 commendations have been given to individuals, groups and organisations who have, through their initiative and enterprise, made our city a better place in which to live.

In 2025 the Civic Trust received a total of 12 nominations for consideration by the Awards sub-committee from which 5 awards and 1 commendation were selected in 3 categories. There are no nominations in category D and no Supreme award this year. Those projects awarded include: The new Court Theatre, The Theosophical Hall, The Youth Hub, Te Kuru wetland and Rapaki church and school restoration. The project commended is Qb building 235 – 237 High St.

The 2025 Awards sub-committee is: Vivien Bishop, Hamish Gilchrist, Judith Knibb, and Neil Roberts.

## Category A

*A project that has made a material and beneficial change to the City environment, involving either development on a new site or re-development of an existing site or structure.*

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### AWARD

#### The New Court Theatre

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**Citation:** *The Christchurch Civic Trust recognises the quality of building design and functionality of a new arts facility for Christchurch.*

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**Recipient:** The Court Theatre Trust

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The Court Theatre founded in 1971 has gone through many moves and changes in its 54 year history to reach the high point of its present incarnation.

From 1976 until 2011 its home was The Christchurch Arts Centre where its identity was firmly established in the minds of the Christchurch theatre patrons.

With severe damage to its building following the 2011 earthquakes, the Court Theatre was forced to relocate, and for the past 13 years has operated from an old grain store in Addington, known colloquially by many as ‘The Shed.’

However, the desire for a new permanent home back in the city was strong, and was finally realised with the opening of the new theatre building in May of this year.

The \$56m new Court Theatre complex, that includes a 379 seat auditorium and total theatre amenities adds an important essential element to what is now the performing arts precinct of Christchurch.

Designed jointly by Athfield Architects and UK based theatre specialists Haworth Tompkin the building was constructed by Hawkins New Zealand. A special feature of the new theatre is its foyer constructed of steel, and laminated veneer timber with West Coast blackwood floors.

## AWARD

### Renewal of 267 Cambridge Tce

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**Citation:** *The Christchurch Civic Trust recognises the revitalization of an inner city heritage site with the replacement of a complimentary building whilst maintaining an existing historical use.*

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**Recipient:** The Theosophical Society

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**Entrance to the new Theosophical Society Building**

The original Heritage listed, Cecil Wood designed, building was demolished in 2012 following the Christchurch earthquakes.

When it was time to rebuild, members of the Society approached William Fulton of Team Architects to design a new building. Andrews Construction completed the build with meticulous attention to detail throughout.

Seven steps paved with grey and white tiles lead from the street to the cyprus clad entrance porch. Double doors, with distinctive wrought iron handles, hand- made in Ukraine, open into the hallway.

Windows replicate the originals along with the internal mouldings which echo the neo-classical design. Throughout, good use is made of natural light, varied textures and a limited colour palette which contribute to a sense of tranquility. The flooring is French oak, over 600 years old and not used for 100 years after milling. This adds to the timeless nature of the interior. The library, with its solid oak bookcases and traditional ladders, houses a valuable book collection and historical memorabilia. A large meeting room, a practical kitchen and smaller spaces are all linked effectively and contribute to making this a very successful design.

## AWARD

### New Building development at 109 Salisbury St Christchurch

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**Citation:** *The Christchurch Civic Trust recognizes the quality of sustainable architectural design of a community facility for social and health benefit for youth.*

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**Recipient:** The Youth Hub Trust ~ Te Hurihanga o Rangitahi

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#### **The Youth Hub buildings**

one in every five New Zealanders require support and one in ten face severe adversity in many aspects of their lives including health, education, employment and housing. Youth Hub Christchurch is the first of its kind in New Zealand and aims to break this cycle of adversity. Dame Sue Bagshaw, well known for her commitment to young people's welfare is chair of the Youth Hub Trust. Land for the project is owned by Anglican Care and is leased to the Trust that has built and runs the facility. One of the key features of the Hub is its 22 room housing facility run by the Methodist Mission, supporting 16 to 24 year olds for three to eight months.

Many youth and social workers rent space independently in the building and three doctors and two nurses have recently become medical tenants. An engineered timber structure with full height atrium is only one very welcoming aspect of the building and reflects an intensive design process with collaboration between the various parties involved. There are many other intimate and innovative spaces. The Youth Hub is to be congratulated, not only on its achievement so far but on its plans for future development.

## Category B

*A project that has restored, upgraded or protected a site, building or group of buildings of significant heritage character or conservation value.*

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## AWARD

### Rāpaki Heritage Church and School

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**Citation:** *The Christchurch Civic Trust recognises the initiative in retaining and restoring heritage character buildings for the benefit of the Rāpaki community.*

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**Recipient:** Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki) Rūnanga

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The Rāpaki Rūnanga undertook a formidable task in restoring two major heritage public buildings, the Rāpaki church, and school in its community. The 1869 church fell into disrepair over many years but was successfully restored in 2022.



#### **Restored Rāpaki School**

However, the Rāpaki school building completed in 1876 was a more challenging project to restore. Closed as a school since 1946 the building required extensive restoration from the ground up to make it acceptable for the Rāpaki Marae community. Restoration was commenced in February 2024 and was completed in December at a cost of \$700,000. A grant of \$400,000 came from the Christchurch City Council heritage fund with additional support from Parkinson Memorial Trust, Heritage New Zealand, Lottery Facilities committee and Rātā Foundation. The architects for the project were Avenue Architectural Builders and design was led by Stephen Keogh of Sketch Lab Architecture.

## Commendation

### 235 – 237 High St Christchurch

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**Citation:** *The Christchurch Civic Trust commends the redesign and repurposing of a city character building, and retention of existing interior heritage design features*

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**Recipient:** Qb Studios

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The South Island's largest purpose-built flexible workspaces occupy two buildings at 235 and 237 High Street. The vision and tenacity of owners Mike Fisher, Tom Harding and Alex Brennan resulted in the 1880's Hunters and Collectors heritage building,



**Qb studio building 235 – 237 High St**

damaged in the earthquakes, being refurbished in 2023 then integrated with a new purpose built structure next door. Qb Modular, Centraus Engineers and Wyatt Construction made this project a reality. A five-story atrium, the centrepiece, connects the old with the new, allows natural light to flood in and links the spaces with the outside environment. Structural features of the old building such as the original concrete and brickwork, wooden floorboards, and the sarking on the top floor ceiling meld with the steel reinforcing, metal, and glass of the new. The building contains a range of modern, flexible spaces with office studios, a boardroom, a break room, collaborative hubs, members' lounges and a café. The QB building is certainly a valuable addition to the High Street precinct.

## Category C

*Engineering, environmental, transport and other infrastructure projects that enhance city functions in efficient, cost effective, safe and environmentally friendly way.*

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### Te Kuru Wetland Reserve Halswell Christchurch

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**Citation:** *The Christchurch Civic Trust recognises the vision and enterprise, in developing a sustainable ecological, and recreational wetland environment in Christchurch.*

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**Recipient:** The Christchurch City Council

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The Te Kuru wetlands is a 109 hectare stormwater facility featuring expansive wetland areas, stormwater storage and filtration basins. There are more than 800,000 new native plants and trees on site and the park-like environment attracts numerous native birds and insect species. The 14 kilometers of recreational pathways are shared by pedestrians and cyclists and the various ramps, bridges etc are substantial and beautifully designed. Many of the walkways form loops which provide variety and enable visitors to select a pathway suited to their



**A part of Te Kuru Wetlands Halswell.**

needs. This very successful project reflects the incredible effort from staff, contractors and community volunteers and is a great asset for all to enjoy.