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Submission: Options to Upgrade the Invercargill Inner City

1. I am Bob Simpson Architect, Builder and Coordinator. Invercargill is my home town. I was born here in 1947. Five sisters and a brother joined me in our Waikiwi home. I enjoyed five years at Southland Boys High School, one year at Otago University, where I passed my intermediate exams and gained access to the University of Auckland's School of Architecture. In 1970, I completed my five-year degree in architecture.
2. An important lesson we received in our first week at Arch School was 'if the lecturers taught us a quarter of what we needed to know, they would have done well, the rest we had to learn off each other and for ourselves'. So, in the last 52 years I have learnt plenty about the art and craft of being an architect. Architects are generally involved with providing places for people and being magicians. I also learn the lesson from Christopher Alexander's paper 'A City is not a tree; the city is a semi lattice. That is, it is the city is very complicated and newly designed ones seldom work well.
3. In 1971 I started work for Fletchers Design Group on the then new Glenfield Shopping Centre on the North Shore in Auckland. Then I worked in a range of jobs in Auckland, gained registration as an architect in 1974, and returned to Invercargill late that year. Then I worked in Invercargill as an architect, a Community College tutor, the Chief Architect of the Southland Education Board and in 1982 my late wife Margery and I started our business, Bob Simpson Architect, from home at 11 Park Street.
4. Today I speak on "Options to Upgrade the Invercargill Inner City".
5. I support the momentum to upgrade the Inner City, established by the Southland Regional Development Strategy (SoRDS) team and more recently by Scott O'Donnell and Geoff Thompson.
6. The SoRDS team identified the lack of effective leadership in the Southland Province and the need to upgrade the Inner City. SoRDS have encouraged the Invercargill Licensing Trust to develop a new hotel, on a small nearby site, on the corner of Dee and Don Street.
7. Scott and Geoff have made a huge personal commitment to the challenging task of developing this proposal with the idea of improving the Inner City.
8. Since 1975 I have spent many hours making suggestions and submissions about developing a better city plan and a more Vibrant Inner City. I have had a few successes and many disappointments.
9. There is little argument about the numerous problems in the Inner City. The harder part is to define the reasons why this has happened and the ways to improve the situation.

10. The previous CEO of the Invercargill City Council started in 1986 and finished in 2018 and the current mayor started 26 years ago in 1993. Effective Council's need new ideas and renewed leadership.
11. After criticism about Mayor Shadbolt's performance in 1993, early in his time in Invercargill, he called a meeting to discuss what the people thought was the job of the mayor. At the meeting the late Bill Richardson spoke and said Invercargill needed to 'improve its act'. Bill spoke of dealing with local councils throughout the country and described Invercargill's performance as at the lower end of the scale.
12. Mayor Shadbolt has been a good entertainer. Now he is fearful and lacks vitality. It is a good time for the mayor's supporters to encourage him to retire gracefully and find him another vocation.
13. Since the 1980's there has been little interaction between the ICC's planning staff and the local building professionals. In my opinion, this has led to District Plans which lack credibility and a coherent picture of what the Council would like to happen especially in the inner city.
14. Over the years many decisions seem to have been made to choose cheap sites. The Kelvin Hotel has a small site and few car parks. The Ascot has huge car parks and is kilometres from the inner city.
15. Parts of Stadium Southland could have been built near the inner city. The old Show Grounds now hosts many buildings including a significant office building which should have been in the inner city.
16. So, we now have a low-density inner city and adjoining commercial areas.
17. I do not think a mall is a good option to improve the Inner City.
18. This current HWCP plan includes a large volume of space on this site. In my opinion they are trying to squeeze too much activity on to this block. Southlanders are used to dropping people off at doctors, retailers and parking nearby. I think the large multi-level carpark with its likely charges, will not be popular.
19. I accept people like congregating and a good pedestrian count is crucial for the success of the inner city. This proposal doesn't feel friendly to pedestrians especially on the Tay Street side.
20. The access for cars and especially for trucks to make deliveries and remove rubbish seem inadequate to me. There may be significant shading and wind tunnels created by this proposal.
21. There are other nearby sites which could be developed later. Our city needs opportunities for locals to start and develop businesses. This HWCP Proposal is unlikely to be attractive for Southlanders wanting to start a business. Shifting a departmental store from the fringe into this proposed development will create another problem.

22. As I have stated previously, I think the HWCP team 'should take a break' and review the well-considered opinions, presented at this hearing.

23. Then I suggest HWPC Management Ltd:

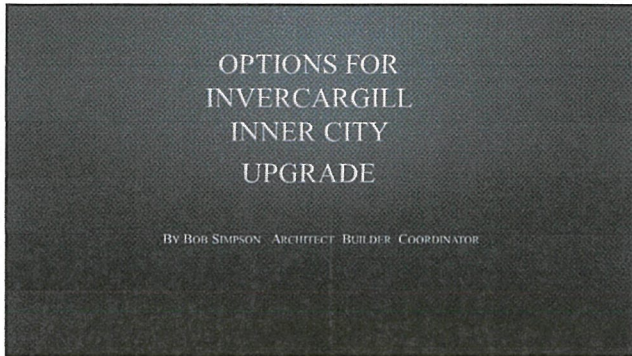
- a. Propose a more modest development on this block;
- b. Save some heritage buildings and repurpose them;
- c. Reduce the disruption to the adjacent businesses;
- d. Gain the support of our community for their revised plans.

24. I think our community needs to engage the expertise to help us:

- a. Define the problems in the inner city;
- b. Produce some options which:
 - i. Provides viable retailing;
 - ii. Provides a good sheltered public outdoor space away from main roads;
 - iii. Provides an inner-city enclave for Southland's museum collections, and the three separate art collections.

Thankfully we now have significant energy and momentum.

Now we need to apply find the magic to improve the whole Invercargill Inner City.



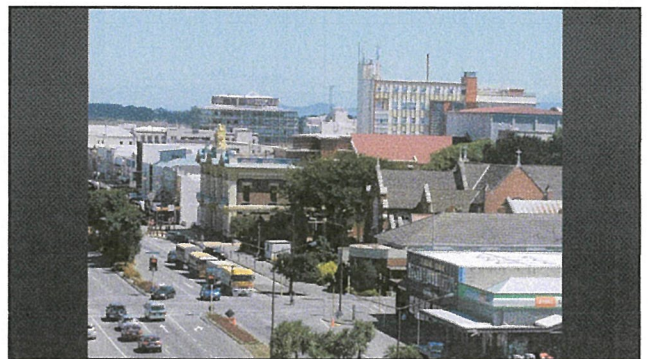
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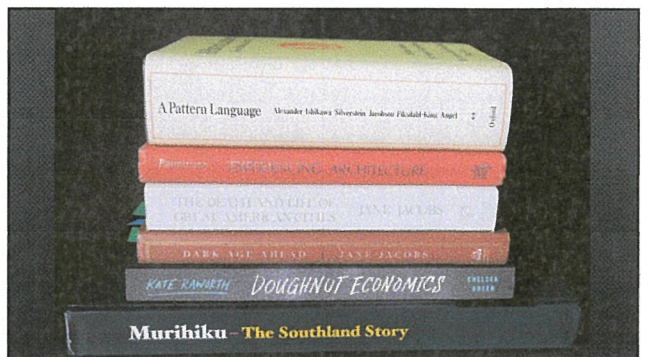
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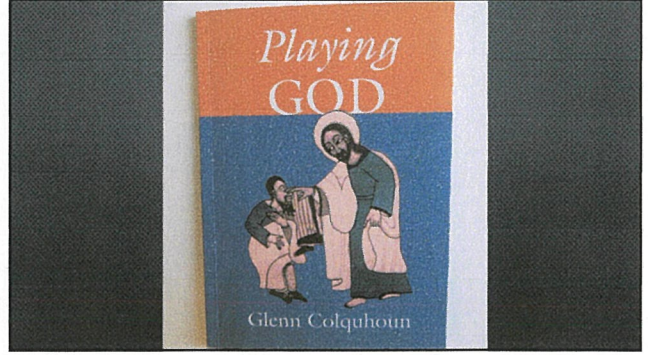
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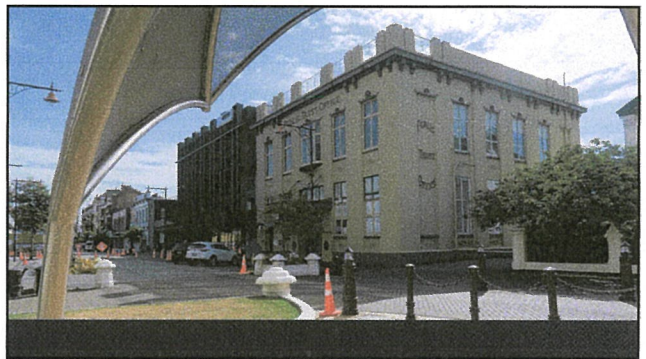
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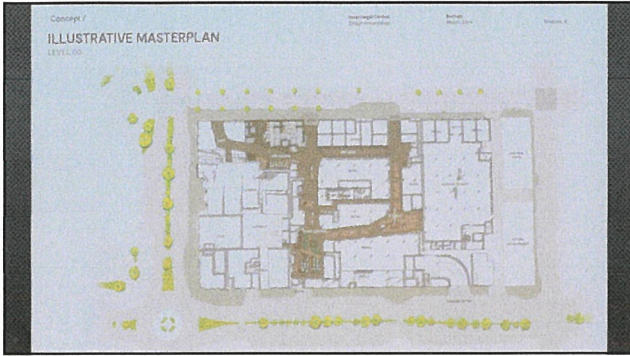
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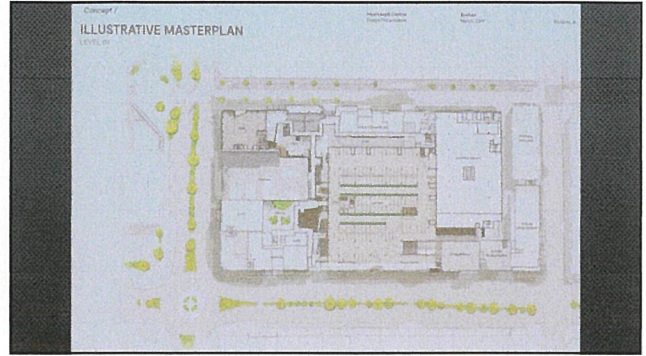
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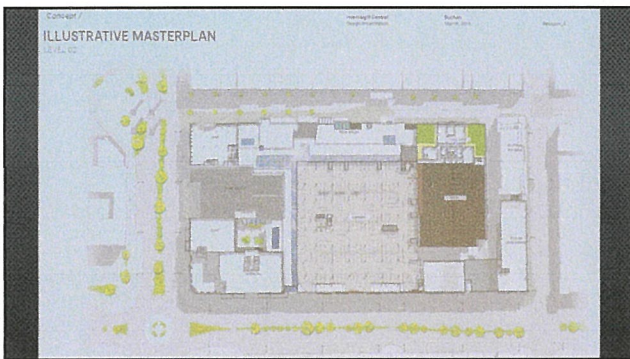
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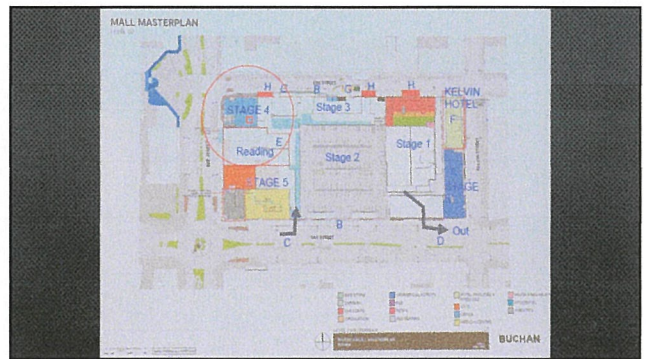
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