

Wachner Place Timeline

ICC archive file mA 35230

Sunday April 16th 1978 – Fire destroys most of the 3 storey Norwich Union Building on the corner of Dee and Esk Streets.

August/September 1978 – Demolition of fire damaged Norwich Union building by Fletcher Development and Construction Co Ltd. As per contract with Invercargill Building Limited.

26 September 1978 – Council resolution to purchase Old Norwich Union building site from Invercargill Buildings Limited for the sum of \$135,000 and “that the council accept in principle the offer of Mrs Wachner to contribute towards the purchase of the Norwich Union site and the naming of the area Wachner Place”. Sub-committee formed to meet representatives of the businesses in Esk St between Dee and Leven St to explain the Council’s total development intentions. Subcommittee: Mayor FR Miller, Crs Fenton and Bunting, City Engineer, Director of Parks and Recreation, Mr Owen Lawrence and Mr J McCulloch (architects).

The land was purchased out of Section 285 Account (Reserves Contributions) and thus automatically became a reserve in terms of the Reserve Act 1977.

11 October 1978 – ICC solicitors advise Norwich Union site now registered in name of Invercargill City Council as and for a reserve pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977.

Thursday November 5 1978 Southland Times Page 1: “Esk Street to get Mall”. Article states the ICC proposes to close Esk St from Dee St to Leven St to establish a central city rest area. It will be named Wachner Place.

15 December 1978 – Hanan Arthur & Co Solicitors, confirm Mrs Wachner will make her gift to council on or about 30 November 1981. “Mrs Wachner is happy to accept the assurances contained in the Town Clerk’s letter of 10 October that the area will be named Wachner Place and that its development as a recreational area will proceed as a present project.”

1978 1979 – Protracted negotiations with Commercial Bank of Australia (CBA) on adjusting northern boundary of Norwich Union site with the CBA.

27 June 1979 – Subcommittee recommend two stage development, Stage 1 being development of Norwich Union site down to Post office site with no vehicular access within this area. Stage II is the development of lower Esk St – as a pedestrian mall. Submissions on proposals were then received.

29 August 1979 – Informal meeting of the Wachner Place subcommittee with engineers, surveyors, tradesmen and Lions Club to outline background to the Council’s plans for the development of Wachner Place and Lower Esk St.

ICC Archive File mA35232

10 November 1980 – Mrs Wachner writes enclosing cheque for \$10,000 balance of \$10,000 will be paid on or before 30 November 1981.

16 December 1980 Council resolves that a scheme Change be initiated and publicly advertised re restricting vehicular traffic through part of Esk St and Lower Esk St.

ICC Archive File mA35233

Saturday 28 March 1981 – Public Notice of change No 55 to the City of Invercargill District Scheme published in Southland Times Saturday 28 March 1981 and Monday 30th.

Monday 20 July 1981 – hearing on ten submissions on change no. 55 to District Scheme.

23 November 1982 - On the advice of the city solicitor ICC withdraws change no. 55 due to exorbitant demands from one objector, and resolved to recommence the plan from scratch. The lower portion of Esk St would remain open to vehicular traffic.

ICC Archive File mA 35238

13 July 1984 – Notice of the legal stopping of Lower Esk Street under the Local Government Act was declared. Details are recorded on S.O. 10295.

Monday 27 August 1984 – Lower Esk Street was physically closed to the through movement of vehicular traffic.

ICC Archive File mA 35316

26 April 1988- Council resolved to purchase 292m strip of land from Telecom (beside former Post Office Building) for \$115,000.

Wachner Place opened Sunday June 18 1988. Mayor Eve Poole. (Mrs Wachner in attendance – photo Southland Times.)