

# THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF CATHEDRAL CITIES AND HISTORIC TOWNS

## CANTERBURY CASE STUDY

by *Green Balance*



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### Special qualities

Canterbury is a city of 55,000 people in east Kent, located in the valley of the river Great Stour. Canterbury is the premier global focus of the Anglican Communion. The three complexes of Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church provide the visual record of the reintroduction of Christianity into southern England in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, and together were inscribed as a World Heritage Site (WHS) in 1988. The Site is still used for its original purpose of worship, learning and teaching 1,400 years later, with St Martin's Church probably the oldest continuously-used Christian site in the English-speaking world. St Augustine's Abbey contains the earliest remains of a Saxon monastic community in England. The Cathedral is one of Europe's great religious buildings; it was in the forefront of architectural development from the Romanesque of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the Perpendicular of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and retains the finest mediaeval glass in England. With its vast size (it is 515 feet long and the crossing 'Bell Harry' tower is 250 feet high) it also dominates views across the city from the surrounding valley sides.



Fig. 1 Canterbury Cathedral in its setting from the north-west at Chaucer Fields, University of Kent

Canterbury has been occupied continuously for over 2,000 years, making it one of the most important archaeological sites in the country. It became a major Roman centre with a wall, backed by an earthen rampart, enclosing 120 acres. The walls were extensively repaired and rebuilt on their existing line in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, of which about 60% of the circuit and one major gate, the Westgate, survive (see for example Figure 2).



Fig. 2 Canterbury City Walls at Upper Bridge Street (SE of the city) from one of 13 original bastions

Canterbury retains a high quality historic environment. Much of the Saxon town and the Cathedral were destroyed by fire in 1067, but there are substantial remains from the mediaeval and Georgian periods, despite extensive redevelopment over the decades and the disastrous 'Baedeker' bombing raids in 1942. Residents mingle with the 7 million tourists who visit each year, mostly for the day. Visitors are a substantial contributor to the local economy, attracted primarily by the outstanding heritage and cultural offer. However, the heritage experience of Canterbury is popularly confined to within the city walls, curtailed by a dual-carriageway ring road around three-quarters of the city which presents a significant disincentive to exploring beyond (see Figure 2). The Cathedral and St Augustine's Abbey are close together, for example, but separated by the ring road, so visitors numbers to the latter are low. The ring road has eliminated through-traffic within the walls, where some pedestrianisation has enhanced the experience, but the road is itself host to either congestion or fast-moving traffic and to poor air quality. Radial roads converge upon it, reinforcing its central role in the transport system and the implausibility of remedying the problem.

## Recent heritage policy and supporting information

The City Council's adopted development plan is the Canterbury Local Plan 2006, from which most of the policies relevant to development and heritage have been saved. The former Kent & Medway Structure Plan and the draft South East Regional Plan, which provided context for the Local Plan, have been abolished. The heritage policies in the 2006 Plan are comprehensive, reflecting an evolution of thorough policy development in the preceding decades. They include Policy BE4 to protect the World Heritage Site "as a key consideration in determining planning applications", Policy BE10 to protect the historic landscape, and Policy BE7 on conservation areas, whereby "Development within, affecting the setting, or views into or out of a conservation area... should preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's character or appearance." Other typical plan policies on listed buildings and a range of other issues are present, together with extensive built environment policies on design quality, the public realm and the need for design statements and/or development briefs with planning applications.

In addition the Local Plan identifies two Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLVs) in the District, one of which covers the valley of the River Stour around Canterbury and is identified on the Proposals Map. This designation specifically "seeks to protect the historic setting of Canterbury and the World Heritage Site" (paragraph 5.36), with Policy R7 stating that "In considering applications for development within these areas the Council will pay particular attention to the impact of the proposals on the local landscape character and/or role and on its historic setting. Development proposals which would cause unacceptable harm will not be permitted." The Local Plan heritage policies taken together are thorough and high quality, extending from the development site to the city in its wider context.

The policies are supported by a range of background documents which indicate how the Council expects to apply its policies. Chief among these is the *Canterbury Conservation Area Appraisal* (CAA) covering the whole of the historic area (extending beyond the city walls on all sides) with substantial additional areas beyond. Although adopted in October 2010, this 220 page document is a successor to previous versions and continues to apply earlier appraisal methodologies. This is an exemplary appraisal, with two of the ten substantive chapters addressing 'The landscape setting and views' and 'The approaches to Canterbury', which reinforce the Conservation Area and AHLV policies in the Local Plan on protecting the city's setting and its appreciation from surrounding areas. It notes that the Cathedral was always intended to be conspicuous and prominent. The setting chapter includes nine longer-distance 'view cones', "selected for assessment because they are well established and provide the best location to illustrate the heritage significance of the city and the World Heritage Site" (see e.g. Figure 1). The view cones were established in the late 1980s and the Council considers that no significant development has affected them for 25 years.

Nearly all the thirteen roads into the city, and the two railway lines, give a view of the Cathedral at some stage along their route. The New Dover Road (Figure 3) was built in 1792 as a straight 1.5 mile turnpike to provide a more direct route into the city's St George's Gate (in effect an early Watling Street bypass), and is the only approach to provide an almost continuous view of the Cathedral, though the Highways Authority has marred this with street furniture and signage.



Fig. 3 View into Canterbury from the south east down the New Dover Road

The Council's heritage policies are also supported by other documents. The *Canterbury World Heritage Site Management Plan*, April 2002 focuses closely on the three sites associated with St Augustine and the buffer zone around them. However, it does refer to the AHLV providing the wider setting for the WHS, in *Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value* published by the City Council in 1999, though that document has disappeared from the record and is no longer in use. A *Heritage Archaeology and Conservation Supplementary Planning Document* from October 2007 is still extant. This addresses mainly detailed heritage issues in the development process, but at the urban scale it provides brief guidance on views and vistas, the importance of the historic roofscape of Canterbury (including the merit of the insistence on new buildings having pitched roofs, ideally with red Kent peg tiles), and the setting of the city. It also refers to the *Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation*, May 2001 (by Oxford Archaeology Unit, for Kent County Council and English Heritage) which revealed a deep and complex time-depth to the Kentish landscape. Although available as part of the evidence base for modern planning, this is another document which is not currently used in any way within the City Council. Actively used is the *Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal*, August 2012 (draft by Jacobs for the City Council), a successor to previous landscape appraisals. This provides considerable valuable information on many aspects of the landscape, cultural heritage and natural environment, much of it in map form, together with descriptions of 48 landscape character areas (outside the designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty across the southern 30% of the District). Taken together, the supporting documents provide thorough information for sound planning of Canterbury's heritage at the scale of the whole city and its setting (as well as at a detailed level).

## Recent development and heritage conservation

At the strategic level there has been very little peripheral housing development around Canterbury in the last ten years. The city has seen only modest growth on allocated (mainly brownfield) sites and through urban land recycling on windfall and small sites. Housing development has been steered principally to Herne Bay and the coastal towns. However, there has been considerable building for the universities whose campuses are within Canterbury and on its northern fringe. Economic development has been encouraged mainly away from Canterbury in other settlements or in regeneration areas of the city where direct impacts on heritage are likely to be modest. Sites continue to come forward for redevelopment within the central historic area, including on war-damaged sites still used as car parks. Here there is a tension between residents wishing to retain parking opportunities and the pressure for new uses. The result has often been only modest intensification of development on city centre sites, though higher densities have been achieved on redevelopment sites such as the Tannery (within the city walls on the south-west side). Intensification of development in the city to protect peripheral green fields is not a Council objective. Subject to detailed development considerations there has therefore not been much change in the wider heritage setting of the city.

The principal point concerning development within the city is that, after decades of strict control, the local firms helping to design and build schemes for developers are well aware of Council's expectations on heritage issues, resulting broadly in the continuation of traditional building design in the city. The Council is satisfied that its design guidance is for the most part taken seriously by developers and is supported by Inspectors on the rare cases when planning appeals are lodged against refusals on design grounds. Continuing challenges to building heights and design styles can be problematic, though, particularly when their mass and materials are inappropriate. Nonetheless there is scope for greater use of modern architecture where schemes respect their context and the city's heritage.

The principal local amenity society, the Canterbury Society, has expressed particular concerns in its 2013 publication *The Future of Our City* about detailed handling of heritage in the city centre, particularly in respect of inadequate enforcement, the reduced attention to the assessment of proposals on design grounds, signage and the need for improvements to the public realm to present a good looking, well-maintained city (page 23). The Society advocates simple design guidance leaflets for local businesses and an independent Design Panel to advise the City Council before significant development decisions affecting the heritage are taken. This would complement the Canterbury Conservation Area Committee which examines proposals affecting listed buildings. These points generally reflect greater concern with detail and with management than with the handling of growth in general in a heritage context (though proposals in the new Local Plan are changing that – see below).

Views into the city centre have been affected by modern development not always being kept to traditional local building heights and have been affected in one important case recently. This is the new Marlowe Theatre with its chamfered fly-tower, which is sited close to the Cathedral and has impacted on two of the city's most important view cones. First, it is in direct line of sight to the Cathedral from the most panoramic vista over the city, which is east south-eastwards from Neal's Place (Figure 4), where the theatre also rises above the

twin towers of the Westgate. Second, it appears in the line of sight affecting the World Heritage Site, from St Martin's Church westwards towards the Cathedral (Figures 5 and 6).



Fig. 4 Canterbury and the Cathedral from Neal's Place



Fig. 5 Canterbury World Heritage Site: the Cathedral from St Martin's Church

Tree growth is another problem. The CAA comments on the view cone from St George’s Field, east of the Cathedral, that “The trees should be managed to retain the view of the Cathedral and of the roofscape to the west”, but Figure 7 shows this has not been achieved. A comparable problem is arising with the view cone from St Thomas’s Hill in the north-west (Figure 8) despite similar advice in the CAA. Finally on vistas, lamp-posts and other street paraphernalia have for many years intruded into important approaches into the city, such from Rheims Way near Harbledown on the western approach (Figure 9) (and see Figure 3).



Fig. 6 Detail of Figure 5



Fig. 7 Canterbury Cathedral from St George’s Field



Fig. 8 Cathedral from St Thomas’s Hill



Fig. 9 Cathedral from Rheims Way, Harbledown

More weight should be given to the view cones in the *Canterbury Conservation Area Appraisal* by the City Council. Furthermore, the *World Heritage Site Management Plan* has not been taken forward since 2002 and a review of this key document is now due. There is no World Heritage Site Manager post. Coupled with the demise of the *Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value* and the lack of awareness of the *Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation*, there must be cause for concern about the strategic context for the development of Canterbury in its setting.

### The planning and development context

#### *Students*

The last 10-15 years have seen some significant changes to the context in which heritage protection in Canterbury has been placed. The first is a rapid rise in the number of students in the city, which now exceeds 30,000. They are spread across four universities: University of Kent (the largest and most prestigious), Canterbury Christ Church University, University for the Creative Arts and the much smaller Girne American University. Even assuming no

double-counting of students in the resident population at the 2011 Census, which may be optimistic, students add 55% to the resident population of the city during term time. There is only enough purpose-built student accommodation for 21% of the student population, so this exerts enormous pressure on the local housing market. Concentrations of students, pressure on the rental market, take-up of family accommodation and pressure to convert large properties to multiple occupation are all undesirable features experienced in the city. Rents are pushed up and the city's affordability has declined. The City Council encourages the construction of purpose-built student accommodation ideally on-campus or by the redevelopment of non-residential sites, rather than on sites allocated for general housing. The University of Kent is committed to building additional halls of residence on its site north of the city between St Thomas's Hill and St Stephen's Hill, though the net effect may reduce student numbers commuting in from the coastal towns rather than relieve the Canterbury rental market discernibly, or may only address future increases in student numbers.

### *Conservation staff*

The second challenge affecting development and heritage protection is the decline in the number of qualified Conservation Officers available to the City Council. The Conservation team for the whole District currently comprises a heritage and design manager, 1.6 full-time equivalent Conservation Officers and one archaeologist (0.8 FTE). This represents a decline over the last 6-10 years when there were not only two Conservation Officers, a Conservation Architect and a full-time archaeologist, but also two Conservation Surveyors, a planner working in development briefs and conservation areas (who moved to planning policy) and a graphic designer. A senior Conservation Officer oversaw the team and there was administrative support. The Conservation Surveyors spent much of their time working on conservation projects that were grant-aided by English Heritage and a substantial local heritage grants scheme, but also updated the buildings-at-risk register and assisted on other Listed Building works. When the grant programmes largely disappeared (now down to just £40,000 annually) the surveyors retired. The graphic designer assisted with a stream of Conservation Area Appraisals, development briefs, etc. which have now reduced to a trickle. This and the other posts were lost to the Conservation team.

The Canterbury Society has expressed concern about the loss of qualified conservation staff, with one of the key recommendations in its report *The Future of Our City* that the Council should "Reinstate jobs in the conservation section of the council, so that suitably qualified officers are able to advise on conservation issues and planning applications, and to give priority to enforcement and to advice about signage and shop fronts." Canterbury is reflecting the national decline in numbers of conservation staff identified in annual reports on 'Local Authority Staff Resources' (prepared by English Heritage, the Association of Local Government Archaeology Officers and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation). This must be of concern in such an important heritage city, and is also surprising considering the central role of heritage in underpinning the vitally important local tourist economy.

### *Councillor priorities*

The Council Members' *Corporate Plan 2011-2016* emphasises economic growth as a priority, but includes an environmental theme which would "conserve and enhance our beautiful



towns” and ensure that “plans and activities give sufficient protection to heritage sites and the built and natural environment”. It will also be “promoting the district as a world class cultural and heritage place to live, work, learn”, and reference is made to the World Heritage Site. The approach is therefore supportive of heritage but well short of viewing heritage as a driving force in the city.

Councillors see Canterbury as an area of opportunity for growth, with professional services and university-based activities complemented by a retail magnet and tourism. With other funding streams cut back, the New Homes Bonus can appear an attractive alternative source of income, and housing growth is viewed as a means by which resources can reliably be generated to support the heritage and public realm in the city. The policy approach of concentrating development in the coastal towns is therefore being changed in favour of Canterbury itself. The forthcoming Local Plan is expecting to plan for 47% of the District’s housing development to be in Canterbury compared with 36% of the District’s population there. The Council views this as a particularly sustainable approach to development in the District, given that Canterbury is the primary focus of employment, that sustainable transport is being built into the main development (superior to the impacts of alternative development locations), and that the allocation of large sites will be more effective at generating funds for infrastructure improvements than would dispersal elsewhere.

The third change in context is therefore in the political interests compared with ten years and more ago, when the heritage of the city took greater political priority. That enabled heritage staff to prepare supporting documents, spend money on historic building improvements and exert considerable influence over policy and practice. The preparation of necessary documents continues to be supported, but the internal officer structures which gave effect to the heritage priority (e.g. strong planning officer leadership on heritage, heritage represented in forward planning, and the backing of a substantial conservation team) have weakened. In some contrast to this direction of travel, local businesses are now funding greater attention to heritage. The new Business Improvement District in Canterbury, ‘Canterbury Connected’, has promoted a *Canterbury Destination Management Plan* which is strongly based on promoting heritage and culture as central to improving business success. This encourages heritage, public realm and other improvements, which it can support with its own levy on local businesses of about £0.5m annually.

### Development challenges in the emerging Local Plan

#### *Development proposals*

There is an expectation on the City Council through the National Planning Policy Framework to meet its own objectively assessed need for housing by the supply of sufficient land, always with five years’ provision available. This must be matched by appropriate employment opportunities for the labour force and the necessary retail opportunities, transport and other infrastructure to enable the District to function effectively. The Council’s Local Plan to achieve this has been through the stages of an Options Report in 2010 (to some degree overtaken by changes in national and regional policy context), Preferred Options in 2013 and Publication Draft in 2014, with its Examination by an independent Inspector begun in summer 2015.

The Panel Report following the South East Plan Examination in 2007 indicated that the majority of new housing should be “focussed on Canterbury itself”, to support the knowledge economy and reinforce the Regional Hub. This approach was followed through by the City Council in its Preferred Options consultation, but taking into account updated quantitative advice on housing and other requirements. The Local Plan proposed to provide for 780 dwellings annually in the District (15,600 2011-2031), and this was sustained in the Publication Draft. This represents a substantial increase over building rates typically achieved even in the growth period prior to 2007. 4,000 dwellings at a South Canterbury site was the largest single allocation (also with land for business/commercial development), supplemented by a 1,000 dwelling proposal between the villages of Sturry and Broad Oak just beyond the north-east edge of the city. There were in addition allowances for previous allocations and developments, small unallocated sites and unimplemented permissions.

These major allocations around Canterbury were joined in the Publication Draft by two smaller allocations largely on previously-used (‘brownfield’) sites at the Kent & Canterbury Hospital (which proposed to relocate to within the South Canterbury site, offering 810 dwellings but a lesser net gain in dwellings overall) and the Howe Barracks east of the city centre (400 dwellings). Neither of the brownfield sites nor the small site expectation for the district of 138 dwellings annually (mainly brownfield windfall sites) appear contentious from a heritage point of view. The valley-side Sturry/Broad Oak site is not intervisible with the city centre, mainly due to intervening existing woodland which would not be affected. The transport infrastructure to support it would be mainly in the river valley and based on public transport including the existing railway line. This scheme has attracted less attention than the South Canterbury site in heritage terms. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that most of the Sturry/Broad Oak site, all the South Canterbury site and the greenfield areas adjacent to the two new brownfield allocations are covered by the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value, designated to protect the city’s heritage.

The economic development land allocations and other development proposals have not attracted as much attention for their heritage impacts as the main housing allocations.

#### *South Canterbury site allocation*

The South Canterbury allocation would extend the city in its south-east quadrant entirely in the countryside, mostly on Grade 1 farmland. This would have a southern boundary on the A2 city bypass, where a new interchange is proposed, a western boundary on the B2068 and a northern boundary on the railway to Dover, but no natural eastern boundary. The main Dover road runs through the middle of the site, while the North Downs Way Long Distance Path would pass for an additional kilometre through a built-up area. The allocated area rises up the southern flank of the Great Stour valley and extends into rolling countryside beyond.

The section of the site closest to Canterbury, on the valley flank between the New Dover Road and the railway (facing the city), is particularly sensitive visually. This is the principal green space seen to the left of the Cathedral’s Bell Harry tower in Figure 1, and a key area of open land in the backdrop to views from an arc around the city’s northern valley side. The Local Plan intends that this should remain open space. As there is currently no public access

to it, the proposal would open up views to the city, which are at present limited to a confined view from the North Downs Way over post-war suburban development (Figure 10).



The top of the valley side in this direction is marked by a narrow line of trees. Beyond, the land falls away towards a small existing industrial estate on the northernmost side of the allocated site, out of sight of the city and in open countryside (Figure 11). However, much of the allocated land remains elevated, particularly near the New Dover Road and in the western area (Figure 12). Although barely visible from the city, this land forms the setting of the city when viewed from the

Fig. 10 Canterbury seen to the NW from North Downs Way northern valley side (e.g. the land in front of the pylons [which cross the allocation site] in Figure 4).



Fig. 11 South Canterbury allocation site view NE from nr. New Dover Road, Canterbury off to the left



Fig. 12 View north from the South Canterbury allocation site, from west of Old Dover Road

Overall, development of the South Canterbury allocation site would have some impact on the setting of Canterbury when seen from the northern valley sides of the river Great Stour. There is some scope to mitigate this by substantial tree-planting on the crest of the southern valley side between the New Dover Road and the railway, but much less so on the gently rising ground between the Old Dover Road and B2068. The direct visual impact on the historic city would be minimal, other than from the Cathedral's Bell Harry tower itself. The proposal would involve the loss of attractive countryside (see Figure 13) including an orchard and would entail a serious loss of the highest grade agricultural land. However, other direct impacts are not expected by the City Council to be significant. The Council argues that this site is the one on the periphery of Canterbury which has the least adverse impacts for accommodating 4,000 dwellings: landscape and heritage setting impacts elsewhere would be greater and high grade farmland around Canterbury is difficult to avoid.



Fig. 13 South Canterbury allocation site looking east over the north-east section (railway on left)

The principal effect of the development allocations on heritage is therefore likely to be the pressure of the additional people on the local transport system and on the demand for residents' access to an already crowded historic city. The four allocations sites noted would generate about 6,000 additional households (around 14,000 people) by 2031, which is the large majority of all 7,300 households extra expected to live in Canterbury from all sources (e.g. including small site redevelopments). The single greatest transport requirement will be to connect the South Canterbury site to the city and existing communications networks.

The City Council has high aspirations for green transport at South Canterbury. A relocated and expanded park-and-ride facility is proposed, supported by a fast bus service around the west side of the development to join the Old Dover Road and reach the bus station. Various cycle routes are also proposed into the city (though these appear to disgorge onto existing roads, which lack cycle tracks), and at between one and two miles from the city walls all parts of the site are within walking distance of the centre in varying degrees. Travel Plans for the Universities are also proposed, to reduce private vehicle use. Furthermore, the City Council does not intend to increase car parking space in the city centre (and may reduce it), so there is little scope to take additional vehicles there in any event. The Council reports that by parking controls and providing park-and-ride schemes it has been able to constrain traffic volumes in the city centre to mid-1980s levels, and it intends to maintain this. A specific objective is that there should be no net increase in city centre traffic as a result of the entire South Canterbury development at 2031. No new 'magnets' will be proposed in the city centre, provision is already made for food shopping at out-of-centre locations, and

there remain opportunities to explore traffic demand management, such as 'click and drop' online ordering and the dropping-off at the park-and-rides of goods purchased in the city centre. A new A2 interchange will allow motorists to use the allocation area more easily without needing to enter the ring road. The intention is that the net result overall should be no adverse secondary impact on heritage (or air quality) from traffic, and potentially heritage improvements as the additional wealth generated by the growth can fund new benefits.

These intentions are clearly admirable. However, it has been beyond the scope of this study to examine their feasibility, either financially or in practice. Matters needing close examination include the scale of infrastructure proposed in relation to the funding which the development can generate. The green transport benefits to be achieved at the allocation site may also need to happen on existing estates to deliver the overall results: the implication otherwise is that the residents of 4,000 dwellings can be persuaded to avoid using cars for most journeys, particularly in the city centre. This will be a challenge with the city's principal employer, the University of Kent, on the opposite side of Canterbury.

### Lessons learnt

The outcome of the Local Plan process is not yet known, so any commentary is provisional. A long and successful history of heritage protection through the planning system in the city of Canterbury needs to be reflected in the new Local Plan. In the face of growing development pressures and downward pressure on resources (in conservation, planning and enforcement), there is some threat to the continued success of historic protection policies. There is, however, some resilience built into the system through expectations and established good practices amongst architecture businesses in the city, plus a body of adopted guidance, but the risks are mounting as challenges are made to controls over design, building heights, massing and materials. Renewed vigilance to ensure continuation of past successful policy responses to these threats is now required as the new Local Plan for the city council is finalised.

Major development sites are currently being promoted around Canterbury, especially a 'South Canterbury' urban extension with 4,000 houses and ancillary development to the south east. All are within the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value designated specifically to protect the heritage of the city in its river valley setting. This AHLV is an established planning policy and still included as a mapped policy in the emerging Local Plan for the District, but has not been a guiding force shaping the pattern of development. A search for development locations with the least environmental impacts turns out not to be the same as protecting the heritage setting of the city. Heritage does not look after itself: the lesson here is that hard-won policies must be applied and be seen to be applied in order to do their job of protecting heritage.

The other principal strategic methodology available, the well-established view cones encompassing the Cathedral from key vantage points around the city, requires attention. Development has recently been allowed within two key view cones, and erosion of other view cones has occurred by failure to lop trees. Action is needed to enhance the principal approaches to the city in co-operation with the Highways Authority. Taken together, the

heritage of Canterbury at a strategic level is threatened. The lesson here is that established policies like view cones work by being used, hopefully becoming so accepted that challenges to them no longer arise, but the principles and practice behind them need reassertion.

The City Council is well aware of the heritage foundation to the economy of the City and District. Its publications (and staff) offer encouraging and impressive statements. Nowhere is this clearer than in the intentions reported for the green transport aspects of the South Canterbury site which, if they were implemented in full, would be a magnificent beacon of achievement. The intention to promote a 4,000 dwelling urban extension over 20 years with zero net vehicular traffic impact on the historic core of the city is a striking aspiration which would see Canterbury famous around the world for a second reason. Making it happen will require huge effort. It remains an exciting challenge to which Canterbury City Council should try to rise as part of a reinvigoration of its heritage policies.

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