



1 Interior Great Hall restoration in process. 2 Arts Centre lecture theatre. 3 Exterior and sunny on the C Block building.

CHRISTCHURCH ARTS CENTRE - BLOCK C

Holmes Consulting for Christchurch Arts Centre

Project Location: Christchurch



The Arts Centre of Christchurch is a locally, nationally and internationally significant set of buildings, which gained even more significance as the devastating earthquakes irreparably destroyed so many other parts of the city's built heritage. The cluster of 23 neo Gothic buildings suffered extensive damage in the earthquakes, and for a time there was concern that some or all of the structures would not be able to be returned to their former glory. Working closely with the Arts Centre of Christchurch team, and a broad group of contractors and partners, Holmes Consulting is leading an extensive restoration programme, already in progress for more than 6 years, and scheduled to continue for a number more. This entry is specific to the recently completed 'Block C', comprising the stunning Great Hall, Clock Tower, Rutherford's Den and the Bunsen café—all located in the north-west corner of the site.

The repair, restoration, strengthening and conservation of these historic buildings was an extremely complex task from a structural point of view, with each separate structure presenting its own set of challenges and demands. To compound the technical difficulties of the site, variability of materials and the extent of the damage, the structural strengthening elements need to be 'invisible' as far as possible, in order to preserve the unique and precious heritage features that make the Arts Centre of Christchurch so special and memorable. The restoration and strengthening of one of New Zealand's most significant heritage sites also needed to take the opportunity to re-imagine the Arts Centre and the role it plays in the community—re creating a vibrant hub of culture, arts, education and creativity, whilst staying true to the structure's deep heritage values.

Looking at the damage to The Arts Centre in the days following the earthquake, the public might have felt this important and historic cultural hub might never open again. Now, with a combination of vision, technical excellence and tenacious project management on the part of the wider project team. The parts of the Arts Centre that are open again are welcoming huge numbers of people back to enjoy its buildings, facilities and atmosphere. A testimony to an unwavering project vision, technical excellence, and the ability to bring new thinking and techniques to heritage structures.

Judging & Copyright Statement

This project is an entrant in the 2016 INNOVATE NZ Awards of Excellence competition. The winners will be celebrated at our Awards Gala Dinner on Saturday, 12th August 2017 in Taupo.

Images and text remain copyright of ACENZ and the consultant firm entering the project. Users are asked to give credit to the photographer where this is specified. ACENZ and INNOVATE NZ are trademarks of the Association of Consulting Engineers New Zealand.