

The site of the town hall is a particularly important place in Christchurch. In recent times it has held the Town Hall, a meeting place for the people of the city and visitors to the city. Interestingly, it has been a meeting place long before the town hall was originally built in 1972.

Victoria Square, the site of the Town Hall, used to be called Market Square. It is a place of rich cultural and significant land (whenua) history for the South Island Māori tribe (Ngāi Tahu) as they came from all over the region to trade goods with other Māori. In the early days of European settlement, the local Māori from Kaiapoi (Ngāi Tūāhuriri), came to Market Square to sell their produce to the new settlers at markets set up on the banks of the Avon River. Stories recall the Square as a lively place where locals took their horses and dogs along with produce to buy and sell.

The Christchurch Town Hall, which opened on 30th September 1972, established a meeting place which was architecturally advanced for its era and much admired. Once the refurbishment is complete, it will regain its architectural, cultural and contemporary significance. Your work on this site is very important to the ongoing story of the Avon River, Market and Victoria Square. What you are rebuilding will become the next part of the story of a culturally and historically significant site, which future generations will learn about and share in.

Questions

- *Why is it important to know about where you are working?*
- *What does the history of the site tell you about how important it has been in the development of Christchurch city?*
- *What will you be contributing to the story of Market Square and the town hall?*