

Property-led regeneration: insights from two towns

BUILDING BETTER
HOMES, TOWNS
AND CITIES

Ko ngā wā kāinga hei
whakamāhorahora

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Research question

How can local property entrepreneurs be enabled to contribute to the regeneration of second-tier settlements?



Why this topic?

- This topic emerged from preliminary talks with property entrepreneurs in Ashburton and Timaru interested in the provision of commercial, retail and hotel premises.
- Those interviewed were people engaging passionately with town centre development projects
- They were also reporting ongoing struggles with the institutions who fund and regulate property development, e.g., Hydro Hotel



\$42 million development planned for site of Timaru's Hydro Grand Hotel

The Hydro Grand Hotel will be demolished to make way for a \$42 million development that its developer hopes will spark "the urbanisation of Timaru".



Approach

- Literature review (year 1) focusing on small-medium sized towns in UK, Europe, Australia and NZ
- 31 interviews in Timaru and Ashburton:
 - Developers and real estate experts
 - Planners, council members
 - Business owners/advisors
 - Urban designers
 - Property owners
- Analysis consistent with the tenets of realist evaluation: “what works for whom in what circumstances and why” (Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012).



Emerging ideas

- New institutionalism as an interpretative approach focusing on: provenance, rules of the game, informal relations, and outcomes in research settings
- Given current institutional arrangements, private entrepreneurs are the only likely developers of commercial property in small towns in NZ
- There is a need to find ways of increasing the capacity of local government to work effectively with these developers.
- Thought needs to be applied to activities which lower the barriers to development activity:
 - Master planning
 - Clearer planning processes
 - Opportunity for PPP's
 - Central government intervention/policy

