



Te Whare Whakatero

Opened January 2024

Photo - Naylor Love / Johannes van Kan

We'd like to say a big thank you to main contractor Naylor Love Canterbury, project manager Logic Group and Athfield Architects for bringing this new library and civic centre to life for our community. It's a special and fabulous space for us all.



Neil Brown
Mayor



Hamish Riach
Chief Executive

Welcome to our House of Ashburton

Civic buildings bring people of a community together and Te Whare Whakaterere, Ashburton's new library and council administration building, has achieved just that.

Since it opened in January 2024, it has been a place for business, for debate, for decisions and gatherings; it has also become a communal space for the community, drawn to a new modern library which features laser cutters alongside books and a recording studio.

Civic centres need to be practical for the day-to-day business of a council, but they can also be aspirational.

Te Whare Whakaterere began its journey in 2018, with the designers asking council and the community what makes this area special.

There were a lot of ideas to integrate into the new building, many connected to the district's braided rivers, farming and nature.

How the building would look was as important as its location and context: It is built in an L shape to give the public playground and courtyard protection from the nor'west wind.

Its western face is connected to Baring Square East, which was also rejuvenated as part of the wider project.

Timber was a conscious choice, because of its sustainability, and the unique use of large post tension timber and steel cables means that in the event of an earthquake, the building will rock and then settle.

Heating and cooling is via an artesian bore, which brings water up at a constant temperature, saving energy.

The building has many sustainable features, including solar controlled lights that only come on when people are in the space or when the natural light drops below a set point.

Like modern buildings, it gathers information constantly from its users to automate the temperature and learn for future operations.

Architects describe it as a living building.

Photo credits:
*Naylor Love Canterbury/
Johannes van Kan
Ashburton District Council*



EARLY DAYS OF THE PROJECT



Signing the construction contract in April 2021.



Te Whare Whakaterere begins to rise above the hoardings in September 2021.



FLOOR SPACE

The building's 6050m2 floor area is spread across three levels. Its L shape form shelters the public courtyard from the legendary Canterbury nor-westerly winds. In a happy co-incidence, the new council chamber is in the same spot as the old county council chamber of the previous building.

PIONEER HALL

A mass timber colonnade and sculptural perforated metal screen provide a unique civic identity fronting the formal setting of Baring Square East, and the design integrates Pioneer Hall, preserving its historic significance by incorporating it into the children's library.

GIANT MURAL

The eastern wall of the children's library features a giant 15.5m mural, especially designed for the space by Ashburton-born author and illustrator David Elliott. The mural includes characters in his Henry, the tidy pig, book series. The work, called Canterbury Tails, was printed onto huge vinyl panels, which are stuck to the smooth surface of the wall.

MAORI NAME

Ashburton's new library and civic centre was gifted the Maori name, Te Whare Whakaterere. It translates literally to the House of Ashburton. The Council Chamber is called Hine Paaka, and the library space is known as Te Kete Tuhinga.

AWARD FINALIST

Te Whare Whakaterere is a finalist in the Property Council of New Zealand's annual property industry awards. It is up against 14 other major projects in the Civic, Health and Arts Property Awards. Winners will be announced at a special function on 14 June.



EARLY DAYS OF THE PROJECT



Mayor Neil Brown hosted a roof shout in June 2022.



The final form of the building was becoming visible in May 2023.

Mayor Neil Brown: This place is for all of us

There are many thank yous to be made when a project as big as this comes to an end.

I think this library and civic building, Te Whare Whakaterere, represents our collective strength as a district and I thank Trevor Watt and his team from Athfield Architects for their skill in creating something physical from all the things we told him were close to our hearts and important to our district.



I also want to thank Naylor Love Canterbury for bringing the plan to life, project manager Shaun Pont of Logic Group and to all those who worked on the building during construction.

Another thank you goes to the people of Ashburton District who helped guide the project in its initial stages and urged Council to think big and for the future.

Constructing Te Whare Whakaterere during the covid-19 pandemic was a significant

challenge, with programme delays and material price increases. But we made it, and the outcome is a state-of-the-art civic building that will be here for the community and Council staff for at least the next 50 years.

The final cost is expected to be around \$62 million and that has been financed through a combination of debt, property sales and a significant \$20 million shovel ready project grant from the Government.

The aim was for this project to be a boost to the town's Central Business District, and a vision for the future.

It addresses our present needs while foreseeing future demands and I'm proud to have been part of the team to see it over the line.

The interior design of the new building represents the concept of working to our strengths, together. It also shares the Maori heritage of our district over hundreds of years.

From the touchstone where you enter Te Whare Whakaterere, to the carvings in council chamber, the building is bound to the people who work here serving the community. It is one place for all of us.



Working as one for the community

The cultural narrative of Te Whare Whakaterere weaves a story of working as one for the good of the community.

Master carver Fayne Robinson's main design consists of four sub-patterns, repeated throughout the building, and representing the concept of working to our strengths, together.

His work in the Council Chamber is inspired by the legend of Hine Paaka, the wife of Maori chief Maru, memorialised in an ancient matai that once stood at Alford Forest and helped guide travellers.

Hine Paaka and native species are represented in patterns in the more public areas of the building and in the library, Te Kete Tuhinga. Public meeting rooms feature koru patterns on the windows, showing local flora, fauna and mahinga kai such as tuna (eel).

Other designs mimic the movement of



water and our braided rivers.

Chief Executive Hamish Riach said the main entrance also featured a diamond shape panel which represented hospitality and providing for people.

"People visit Te Whare Whakaterere to read, be creative, meet their friends or do Council business. It's a real, shared community space."

A pounamu touchstone inside the main entrance features the same welcoming pattern and people are encouraged to rub the stone to get the positive mauri (energy) from it. The stone comes from Jackson's River, South Westland.

A staircase linking the two floors of the library features rock art that was originally depicted on columns in the old administration building, and part of a matai tree trunk salvaged from floodwaters in 2021 and now carved stands on Level 1, linking to the Hine Paaka chamber.



Sustainable timber: Working with wood

Timber plays an important role in Te Whare Whakaterere and it is used widely, from the external balustrades and cladding to the structural engineered timber and internal walls.

The architectural design of the building has allowed a large portion of the timber to be on show and enjoyed by the community, and visitors can see and feel the larch cladding, Southland beech and plywood finishes.

Contractor Naylor Love Canterbury meticulously coordinated the building's services with its timber structure, allowing

the inner workings to be openly displayed without the need for concealed ceilings and wall linings.

This shows off the building's functional beauty and celebrates its structural integrity.

As well as the timber, other robust, textural materials with colour palettes of the district were used throughout the building, including bluestone pavers and broadloom carpets. Materials were selected for their durability, low maintenance and hardwearing finishes.

The use of timber in Te Whare Whakaterere has boosted its sustainability features, and the building achieved a 76 per cent

carbon reduction compared to one of conventional design. The amount of biogenic carbon (carbon that is stored in the timber components of the building for the life of the building) is 1635 tonnes, and that includes the 416m3 of timber framing.

Other sustainable design and operational efficiencies include light coloured roofs and external shading to reduce heat gain, generous glazing and ceiling heights to maximise natural daylight of internal spaces, wind lobbies at the entrances, energy-saving fibre optic cables to desks and an artesian bore that supplies water for the building's state-of-the-art heating and cooling system.



COUNCIL OFFICE

2 Baring Square East
Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 8.30am-5pm
Thursday 9am-5pm

ASHBURTON LIBRARY

2 Baring Square East, Ashburton 7700
Mon & Fri 8.30am-6pm, Tue-Thu 8.30am-8pm
Sat & Sun 10am-4pm

EA NETWORKS CENTRE

20 River Terrace
Mon - Fri 6am-9pm (pools 7pm, gym 8pm)
Sat & Sun 7am-7pm (pools 5pm, gym 6pm)

ASHBURTON ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

327 West Street
10am-4pm daily (late night Wed)