



## Sydenham Pod Park

Christchurch

A vacant lot in the heart of Sydenham has been transformed into a stylish new 'pop up park' thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Christchurch City Council, Beca, Sydenham Quarter Inc and local businesses.

The project is part of Christchurch City Council's Suburban Centres programme, which provides coordinated planning and assistance to help with the rebuild and recovery of suburban commercial centres as focal points for the local community.

Beca staff designed the garden and managed the implementation with staff helping to prepare, plant and paint the park.

The design is based on Beca's supreme award-winning garden from the 2012 Ellerslie Flower Show. Reusing and adapting the design of the large 'pod' from the Ellerslie garden, Sydenham Pod Park seeks to capture the history and character of Sydenham - a central suburb of Christchurch.

The park sits within the foundation remnants of the historic Beverley Buildings built in 1907 and 1911 but damaged beyond repair in the recent Christchurch earthquakes. These remnant concrete and brick foundations provide a 'frame' for the park and create paths that divide spaces and planting areas.

A curved pipe-inspired 'Pod' shelter, steel columns and saw-tooth-shaped sculptures fit with Sydenham's industrial mix of factories, warehouses and railway workshops. Pallet boardwalks represent the grid layout of streets that formed

as the city grew and flax and wetland plants reflect the original wetland marsh ecosystem of the area.

The Pod Park complements adjacent 'Transitional Christchurch' sites including 'Coffee Zone' - a pop up coffee cart and a 'Gap Golf' putting green. Together these provide entertainment for visitors as well as somewhere pleasant for residents and workers to sit and eat lunch.

The park was opened on 16 August 2013 by then Mayor of Christchurch Bob Parker, who said 'projects like the Sydenham Pod Park are a creative way of breathing new life into suburban commercial areas hard hit in the earthquakes. It's been a very successful collaboration involving Council, local businesses and landowners, which delivers another positive step forward for an increasingly vibrant community.'

The paint colours were selected to complement each other and the greens, greys and browns found in the native planting. The colours help create a bright, positive and inviting space for people living and working Sydenham. The pod is finished in **Resene Summit Roof** in **Resene Red Oxide** with SRG grit added for texture. Sawtooth garden ornaments are accented in **Resene Lumbersider Java** on the external faces with **Resene Montoya** on the internal faces. Bench seat ends add an additional level of colour interest with **Resene Java** and **Resene Pirate Gold**.

Lighting at night adds a further dimension with a colour-changing LED system splashing new colours and silhouette shadow forms through the park.







 Resene Bullseye

**Architectural specifier:** James Pearse, Paul Roper-Gee, Greg Rozen, Beca Ltd [www.becca.com](http://www.becca.com)  
**Building contractor:** Stringer Fabricators and HQ Construction [www.hqconstruction.co.nz](http://www.hqconstruction.co.nz)  
**Client:** Katie Smith, Christchurch City Council Urban Regeneration Team [www.ccc.govt.nz](http://www.ccc.govt.nz)  
**Painting contractor:** Wisker Decorating [www.wiskercontracting.co.nz](http://www.wiskercontracting.co.nz)  
**Photographer:** Paul Roper-Gee, Anthony Barker, Dean Carruthers, Paul Barker  
**Supplier - electrical contractors:** Aotea Electric [www.aoteaelectric.co.nz](http://www.aoteaelectric.co.nz)  
**Supplier - landscape materials:** Frews [www.frews.co.nz](http://www.frews.co.nz)  
**Supplier - light fittings:** Mark Herring Lighting [www.lights.co.nz](http://www.lights.co.nz)  
**Other key contributors:** Anthony Barker, Sydenham Quarter Inc (Business Association); City Care [www.citycare.co.nz](http://www.citycare.co.nz)





Plants used within the park are native and representative of the wetland ecosystem that would have been present in the Sydenham area prior to European arrival:

- Purei *Carex secta*
- Toetoe *Austroderia richardii*
- Harakeke/Flax *Phormium tenax*
- Saltmarsh Ribbonwood *Plagianthus divaricatus*
- Silver Tussock *Poa cita*

The park was built, painted and planted over a three week period by local builders with lots of voluntary support from Beca and Council staff and members of the local business community. Many of these businesses donated their services and expertise to help make the Park happen.

Beca moved into Sydenham premises after being forced to quit a quake-damaged high rise in the CBD. The company's technical director of project management, Greg Rozen, said although Beca would eventually shift back to the central city, it wanted to contribute to its temporary host community. "When we move on we want to leave something positive behind, rather than just an empty office block. In the meantime there are 280 people in our building, so they're going to benefit from the park and the rest of Sydenham will too."

At least a dozen local businesses donated labour and materials for the project. Sydenham Quarter Inc chairman Anthony Barker said the joint venture had engendered a real sense of community spirit. His organisation was also very grateful to the landowners, the Bell Family Estate and Ascot TV for allowing the use of their property. "Without their agreement we'd have nothing. We hope this initiative will inspire other landowners along Colombo Street to rebuild or allow other temporary developments on empty sections."

