

## STREETSCAPE CHARACTER

Lorne Street/High Street may be considered as a number of linked yet spatially distinct areas:

### (1) **Lorne Street - Rutland Street to Wellesley Street East**

This section of Lorne Street is part of the broader civic centre, and is strongly influenced by the concentration of civic and entertainment uses prevalent there. The built form of this block has a style and bulk of building frontage reflecting this different pattern of use; to this extent the section of street is transitional between the rest of the High/Lorne precinct and the surrounding city fabric.

The street contains a major civic amenity, the Auckland Public Library, as well as entertainment venues in the form of five cinemas. The Academy Cinema is located beneath the Public Library, whilst the other four cinemas have frontage to Queen Street but are able to be accessed via the St James Theatre foyer which links Lorne Street with Queen Street.



The relationship of the Public Library to the street (and hence to the other amenities) is poor, in that it fails to embrace the street in a way that encourages and invites users. The library has little street presence and no sense of formal entry from the street. Public seating for those waiting outside for the library to open its doors or waiting for friends or just relaxing, is decidedly lacking. Currently the balustrade wall which fronts the building is used for this purpose but it is both uncomfortable and unsuitable for this activity.

The rear facade of the St. James Theatre is interesting but unadorned apart from the entrance. The Public Library makes a strong yet blunt interface with the street. The carriageway then can be likened to a river flowing between two banks. What is needed is a bridging and enlivening street development to facilitate movement between the two sides, linking what are presently isolated entities.



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The potential exists to invigorate the street itself by streetworks and landscaping which create a more positive "sense of place" and bookend open space at the south end of the overall precinct. At the same time these works could offer a more articulated sense of threshold and axial entry to the Library via stairs from a street pleasance area.

The intersection space at Wellesley/Lorne has notable open space quality, especially in the view uphill towards the Art Gallery and Albert Park. To complement this, the development of street landscaping in this area must be conceived as part of this 'oasis' open space concept.

The ASB building on the corner of Lorne Street and Wellesley Street contributes little to the streetscape, being in essence a blank wall. Retail frontages would have greatly enhanced this corner providing activity which is currently lacking.

The Northern end of the street is framed by a pair of reasonably sized trees on opposite sides. Similar green statements in the middle as well as at the other end of the street would contribute greatly to the visual and environmental amenity of the street.

## **(2) Lorne Street - Wellesley Street East to Victoria Street East**

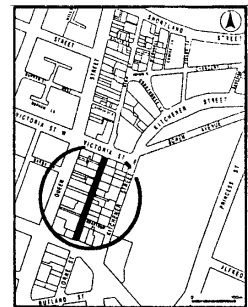
A direct street linking two major intersections, Lorne Street has a wider and more spacious feel than High Street. Buildings are constructed to the street frontage and contemporary buildings show some interesting differences in the relationship of building towers to the street face.

Countrywide locates its full 14 floors directly on the street while Lorne Towers uses an angled facade to relate its building mass to the street. Telecom House sets its tower back from Lorne Street but omits a substantial podium and thus fails to acknowledge the street edge.

Apart from three sites, the west side of the street comprises development or refurbishment which has occurred in the last few years. Because these sites also front Queen Street, the retail continuity of this side of the street has been seriously compromised by loading docks, vehicle entrances to private on-site parking and entrances to the interior of large developments. Where there are shops on the street frontage they are mostly single shops isolated from the rest. In the entire length of the street there is only one group of two shops, and one group of three shops. The remainder are single shops. This has resulted in a lack of cohesion on the west side of the street.

In the extension of the Countrywide development only four small shops along a 64 metre frontage to Lorne Street have been provided. The balance is taken up by two vehicle entrances, a double truck dock and two large pedestrian entrances to the interior of the building. This has also resulted in the loss of five on-street parking or loading spaces. Although the scale of the shop frontages is appropriate, they are disjointed and this mars the retail and streetscape continuity.

The refurbishment of the 246 development too has failed to provide streetscape interest. What was previously shop display window has largely been replaced by a blank wall, and the enlargement of the entrance has isolated two heavy pillars, further compromising the street frontage. The tiny area of display window left over appears insignificant and out of scale.



In contrast, on the East side of this section of Lorne Street, the majority of the buildings pre-date the 1920's, but have been adapted and refurbished a number of times since then. This has meant this side of the street is generally characterised by low rise developments with narrow shop frontages providing a continuous aggregate frontage for almost the entire length of the street. The shops are located on the street boundary, except for the Lorne Towers development which has a partial setback of approximately 3 metres. A number of the shops have small recessed entrances which provide a transition between the narrow pavement and the shop itself and also provide for enticing goods displays. An added bonus of this type of entrance is the extra window display area, allowing window shopping free from disruption to the pedestrian flow on the street. Of particular interest, is the Watchmakers shop located near Khartoum Place in Newland House. This tiny workshop is no bigger than a cupboard and the watchmaker can be seen at work right in the shop window.

The recently-widened and landscaped footpath on the east side has succeeded in greatly improving both pedestrian and visual amenity in this section of street. This will rapidly become apparent as the trees mature.



... a widened and landscaped footpath



## ANNEX 4

Khartoum Place provides an increasingly pleasant contrast to the built character of the street, with its maturing trees protruding from the building line, hinting at the greenspace it contains. Enclosed by buildings on two sides and a fountain on the third this small square functions as a pedestrian link to the City Art Gallery, Albert Park and the University, and as an outdoor room with space for various activities. The central wall, ceramic mural and fountain complement the changed nature of Khartoum Place.



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The upper end of Khartoum Place has become enlivened to a certain extent by the provision of retail uses at street level in the Workingmens Club development on the corner of Khartoum Place and Kitchener Street linking them to the shop and cafe located in the City Art Gallery. This has further stimulated retail uses along Kitchener Street towards Victoria Street.

In St James Apartments site fronting Khartoum Place and Kitchener Street (opposite the City Art Gallery), and Wellesley Street is a pivotal one. The provision of retail uses along the three frontages would provide streetscape interest, further enliven Khartoum Place and extend the Lorne Street precinct into Kitchener Street to link the Art Gallery and Public Library.

