



... Cafe seating outdoors over looking the street ...

The absence of street life such as buskers, street stalls and street cafes was noted in the User Study which was carried out for the area, and many wished to see these activities encouraged. However, as already mentioned the narrow pavements constrain these activities to a certain degree. Street cafes are operating in Vulcan Lane, and proposals for developing Durham Street East for use by street stalls are already under way.

Buskers rely on a high volume of pedestrian traffic so are usually attracted to areas where pedestrian counts or activity are high. As the street activities increase in the precinct, buskers will no doubt be attracted to the area. Areas of street which are not dedicated to active pedestrian or vehicular flow provide opportunities for buskers.

In the main the shops and businesses operating in the High Street/Lorne Street area are different from those operating in Queen Street, being small in scale with narrow street frontages. This allows a greater number to be located within a narrowly defined area, compared to the Queen Street Valley which also does not contain such abundant multi-level activity.

With this variety and diversity in the area, there is always something new to discover, adding a sense of anticipation and mystery to the High Street/Lorne Street experience. The vitality of retail commercial streets depends upon a continuous row of retail establishments which can draw pedestrian shoppers along the length of the street. Open spaces (on-site or as street junctions) strategically placed along the length of a street provide oases or breathing spaces and make an important contribution to the social character of an area. Non-strategically placed open spaces and non-retail uses can interrupt the continuity and pedestrian flow, and impair retail activity along nearby frontages.





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FUNCTIONAL CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

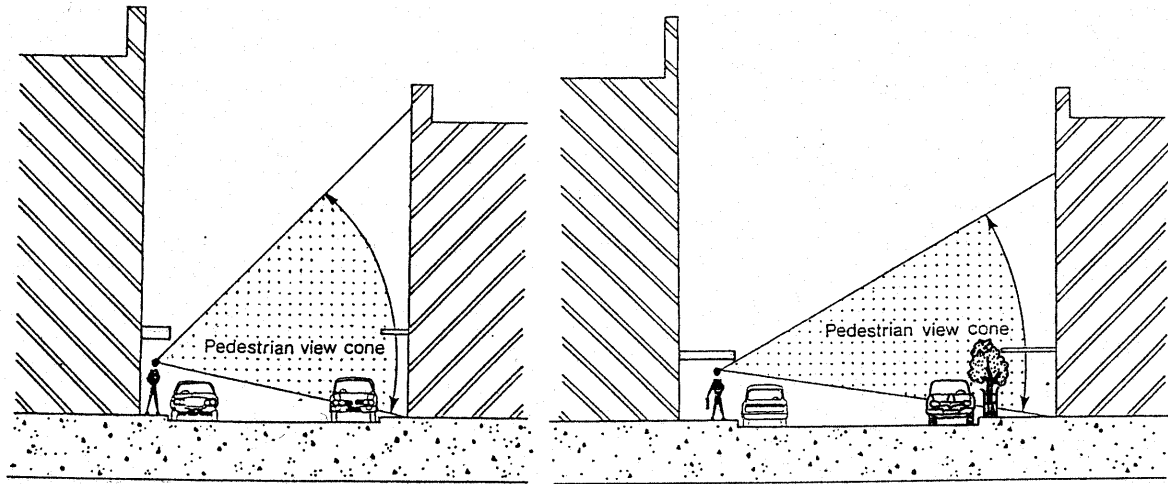
- Provide planning mechanisms and design guidelines to protect as far as is possible the present fine-grained retail nature of the area;
- Discourage large aggregate interruptions to retail facade continuity;
- Encourage street cafe use, both at street level, and on appropriately-constructed over-street verandah decks off upper level cafes;
- Provide where possible street areas which facilitate on-street entertainment and promotional activities; and specific locations for street trading activities



VIEWS AND VISTAS

Views along narrow streets play a large role in user appreciation of the varied qualities and character of the High Street/Lorne Street area, and in a sense of visual continuity across the area.

The visual impact of tall buildings when viewed from narrow verandah-lined streets is diminished by this narrowness, and vistas of tall buildings are gained more as pedestrians traverse the street from side to side. At closer quarters, only a portion of the opposing facade is visible, due to the narrow street width which brings the object closer to the viewer, and to verandahs which limit the field of vision.



Typical cross section through High Street

Typical cross section through Lorne Street

As a consequence the views up and down the street assume greater significance : the sequences of building frontages compressed in perspective view are frequently visible as enticing, rhythmical cadences of architectural detail. This focus on the medium-to-distant view reinforces the tight channels of the street, and leads the eye towards the next 'oasis' or intersection.

When a view out of the area is attainable its impact is greater because of this contrast.

Fortunately such vistas often provide unique views of peripheral structures or key areas around the precinct.

Notable examples include:

- Rutland Street, looking to the Town Hall tower from the Library;
- Wellesley Street intersection, looking to the Art Gallery, and to Wellesley Street east;
- Khartoum Place, looking up the slope to the trees of Albert Park;
- Victoria Street, looking to Victoria Street East, and especially up the slope to the unsurpassed green wall of Albert Park and the central focus of the Chris Booth sculpture;
- Durham Street East intersection, with the equally-striking framed view of Landmark House (the Old Auckland Electric Power Board building);





... the equally-striking view of Landmark House ...



- Freyberg Place, looking uphill on Chancery Street, and especially on Courthouse Lane where the presence of the green wall of Albert Park is again seen;
- Vulcan Lane, looking both ways out of High Street towards the buildings acting as 'stoppers' at either end. The view up Vulcan Lane across High Street is an interesting contrast of scales, with the minutiae of the lane beneath the vastness of the National Mutual Tower in the background sky;
- High Street and Lorne Streets themselves offer a semi-continuous axial view along their length, modulated gently by off-sets of frontages and by subtle changes in direction which initially confined but then reveal views on progress along the route.

This progressive 'unveiling' of new elements seen as an observer progresses is the essence of the glimpse view: just enough is seen to entice further progress and exploration. The presence of the major 'oases' of Khartoum Place and Freyberg Place is flagged from a distance by overhanging greenery projecting into the line of the street and revealing the nature of the open space being approached. This delightful quality would not automatically persist on redevelopment of the Justice Department site at Freyberg Place - but the effect could and should be consciously recaptured by appropriate planting and design of any changes to public and private property.

Tree planting highlighting other street intersections is already apparent at Wellesley Street, and should be enhanced there (and added elsewhere to establish a feeling of "place" and of visual continuity).

Such views and vistas are obviously sensitive to objects or structures which intrude into the line of view.

VIEWS AND VISTAS OBJECTIVE:

- Maintain the existing significant views from public places in and around the precinct, by constraining overlarge or unusually - located signage, banners and other structures which would compromise these views.



MICROCLIMATE

SUN

The current pleasance areas in Freyberg Place are protected by the Transitional District Plan and the Proposed District Plan Central Area Section of the District Plan which ensures the admission of sunlight between 12 noon and 2.00 pm from April to September, and 11.00 am to 1.00 pm October to March (at the new area) plus 11.00 am to 2.00 pm October to March (at the existing seating area) Khartoum Place has developed into an attractive urban space with a Parisian feel, and succeeds in maintaining this quality in spite of now much reduced access to sunlight.

High Street itself is too narrow and oriented too far east of north to be characterised by much midday sun (except during daylight saving). The following table illustrates the facade heights that would have to be achieved right along the west side of High Street if mid-winter sun was to be maintained on the east side footpaths up to the specified times.

	Sun Angle elevation at eastside kerb	Height at property frontage, west side
12 noon	72 degrees	32 m
1.00 pm	48 degrees	11.5 m
2.00 pm	31 degrees	6.3 m

Existing blocks of 7 storeys and more cause most of High Street to be shaded throughout the lunch-hour.

The situation in O'Connell Street is similar. The advantage of the extra width of Lorne Street is largely negated by its orientation 5 degrees further east of north. Midday sun in Vulcan Lane is very difficult to achieve because of its east-west orientation.

In brief, there is no justification for protecting midday sun in these streets. The existing character is of a rather narrow softly shaded street relieved by occasional shafts of sunlight, and compensated by significant sunlight already protected at Freyberg Place.

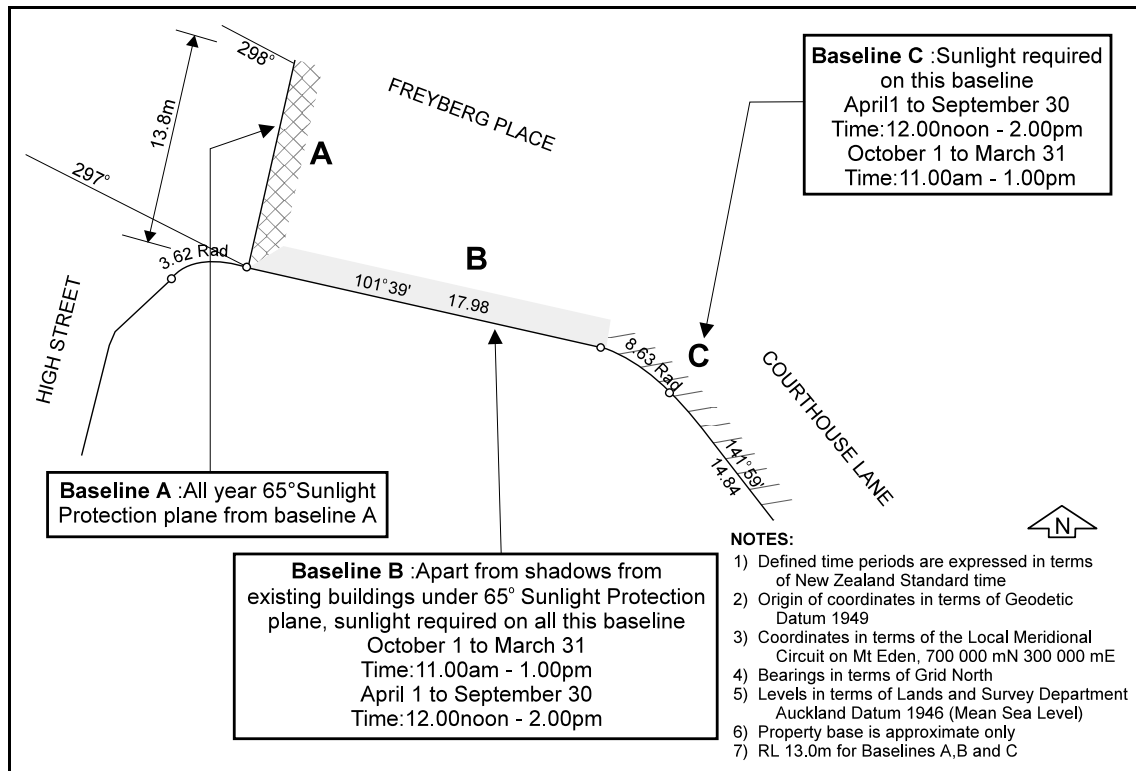
Access to skylight is nevertheless important along High Street, and is in effect protected substantially by the bulk controls proposed.

WIND

Shelter from the wind is important for a square, plaza and outdoor seating area. Protected by the high ground of Albert Park to one side and the tall buildings of Queen Street to the other, the area in general is not exposed to prevailing winds, but nearby structures of increasing height could easily channel untoward effects to ground level. Some care is needed with proposed structures close to the street over about 60 m in height.

Performance measures for wind are contained in the Transitional District Plan and the Proposed Central Area Section of the District Plan. Wind tunnel tests demonstrate the effects of wind on the street spaces and are mandatory where developments are expected to have effects on surrounding streets and public places. Previous detailed wind tunnel testing on large structures proposed for the vicinity of the area have provided a valuable insight into existing ambient conditions in prevailing SW/NE conditions, and how this tends to be modified by the addition of new bulk.





SHELTER

Verandahs over streets provide much appreciated shelter from Auckland's inclement weather. Many buildings in the High Street/Lorne Street precinct do not at present have verandahs. However, new developments are required to provide verandahs in all streets in the precinct except Durham Lane, which is very narrow.

Verandahs are a well-evolved feature of the New Zealand retail/commercial pedestrian environment, and should be zealously retained and enhanced in most significant areas. In areas with such narrow streets, the height and continuity of shelter are critical if effective shelter is to be achieved.

MICROCLIMATE OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain the existing sunlight admission control to Freyberg Place and to Albert Park, and to maintain a lesser level of general access to skylight through appropriate bulk and location controls;
- Monitor and control adverse wind effects of developments or demolitions on surrounding streets and public places;
- Administer existing verandah controls in the precinct with particular emphasis on height and weathering continuity.



PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

The pedestrian environment in the High Street/Lorne Street area is characterised by narrow pavements which accentuate the enclosed nature of the streetscape and highlight the bustle associated with this area of the city.

Cars currently park on both sides of High Street permitting only one lane of slowly moving vehicles. This allows pedestrians to filter across the street relatively easily. This lesser traffic volume creates less noise, allowing conversation, music and aromas from nearby restaurants to predominate in comparison to the wider more heavily trafficked streets such as Queen Street.

Pedestrian movement in Lorne Street is restricted to some degree by increased vehicle speed owing to a moderately greater street width.

High Street, and Durham Street East would benefit greatly from further environmental upgrading of the footpath areas.

Lorne/High Street are well catered for with through site links to Queen and Kitchener Street at various points. These include the Countrywide Arcade, 246, the Mainzeal Kitchener Street carpark, Canterbury Arcade, Century Arcade. These links, incorporated into building development, promote lateral pedestrian movement from Queen Street to High Street and Lorne Street and on to Albert Park. The Transitional District Plan and the Proposed Central Area Section of the District Plan encourage the provision of these in new buildings by incorporating them into the bonus provisions for commercial development. This encouragement recognises the need for effective pedestrian communications between the Queen Street Valley and the University area.

Through site links are complemented by Khartoum Place, Durham Street East, Courthouse Lane and Vulcan Lane.

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVES:

- Retain and enhance a safe, convenient, interesting and stimulating pedestrian environment through careful traffic and on site parking management techniques, and further environmental improvements to High/Lorne Street, Durham Street East and Vulcan Lane to increase the area available for pedestrian amenities such as minor pleasure areas, periodic landscaping, and streetside cafes.
- Maintain and enhance a comprehensive set of east-west links providing pedestrian permeability across the precinct;



TRAFFIC AND PARKING

High Street and Lorne Street (and their immediate precincts) make up a locality in the Central Business District with unusually constricted street spaces and particular problems in servicing businesses, but also with a well-liked and quite specific ambience in spite of extremely limited areas available for pedestrian movement and amenities.

The study area is characterised by a network of narrow one way streets. Traffic flows were found to be low in High Street, 200 vehicles per hour being the highest weekly average. Vulcan Lane and Durham Street East are pedestrian Streets and Khartoum Place has been converted into a square functioning as a through-route for pedestrians via a set of steps between Kitchener Street and Lorne Street.

At present, on-street parking and loading is provided on all the other streets.

Parking is predominantly of short term duration, with Lorne Street between Victoria and Wellesley Streets being exclusively 10 minute parking, with some 5 minute loading zones.

High Street contains predominantly loading zones for goods and service vehicles, with some 5 minute parking.

The peripheral streets too are characterised by short-term parking of 15-30 minutes duration, with some meters being placed in O'Connell Street and in Lorne Street outside and opposite the public library.

Two-wheeled vehicle parking is provided for in Chancery Street and in Lorne Street outside the Public Library, and parking for the disabled is located opposite the Public Library.



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