

## 1. OBJECTIVES

The revitalisation of the Britomart precinct is the largest transport and urban development project in Auckland's history, located where downtown Auckland meets the Waitemata harbour. The precinct itself was once the centre of the early city, with commercial buildings developed for mercantile trades close to the city, rail and water transport.

In March 2001, Auckland City approved a master plan for the development of a downtown underground rail station, transport interchange centred around the historic Central Post Office and revitalisation of the heritage of the Britomart precinct. The development of the Britomart transport interchange and revitalisation of the surrounding neighbourhood complements Council's investment in the public spaces around the Viaduct Harbour, and creates a new transit-oriented precinct within the CBD and adjacent to the waterfront in which to live, work, shop and play. In 2004 a contract was signed with Bluewater to develop the "urban village" of conserved heritage buildings, infill new buildings and a network of public spaces.

Based on the master plan, the strategic objectives for the urban design for the Britomart Precinct are:

1. **Support the role of Britomart as a transport precinct.** A core requirement is that the open spaces and streets can perform a variety of functions for a variety of users, working as attractive and safe public spaces, encouraging pedestrians and the use of passenger transport.
2. **Conserve and enhance the identified heritage buildings.** Conservation plans have been prepared for 18 heritage buildings in the precinct and their restoration forms part of the obligations in Council's sale and purchase agreements for the Britomart precinct. The character of these mostly Victorian warehouse buildings defines the scale and sense of enclosure for the precinct and the adjoining Fort Street area.
3. **Strengthen the character of the streets within and adjoining the precinct.** The pattern of squares and streets is finely grained, based on the 1841 Felton Matthews plan for reclamation from the early harbour. These public spaces need to encourage pedestrian movement and ensure that there are sufficient safe, attractive and sheltered connections particularly between the transit systems and end destinations. In addition, the urban and streetscape design must acknowledge the context of the central city. It must enhance the heritage and natural features of the precinct.
4. **Maintain the fundamental intent of the 2001 master plan and the 2004 Bluewater schemes.** Council's contract with Bluewater requires a form and standard of development as outlined in these guidelines and the Central Area District Plan.

These Urban Design Guidelines are a tool to ensure the development of buildings and public spaces achieve these objectives. Based on these objectives, the key requirements for development in the precinct is to:

1. enhance pedestrian permeability and amenity in the precinct in order to encourage pedestrian activity and the use of passenger transit
2. ensure buildings create a successful interface with the street and surrounding activities
3. develop high quality public spaces that contribute to the identity of Auckland City as the "First City of the Pacific".
4. acknowledge and support the character and fabric of the existing heritage neighbourhood, conserving the heritage value of the precinct.

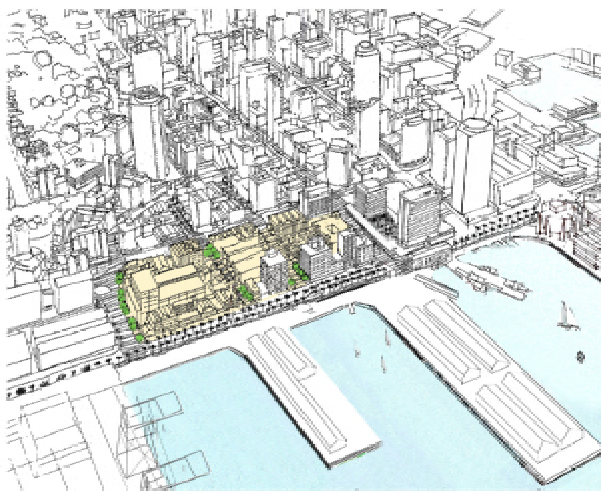
## 1.1 Context

The Britomart Precinct is bordered by the western edge of Queen Elizabeth Square to the west, Quay Street to the north, Britomart Place to the east and Customs Street to the south. Development on the precinct was originally triggered by its proximity to the harbour, and it is that relationship to the waterfront which still characterises the precinct.

Land west of Queen Elizabeth Square, beyond the precinct, is occupied entirely by buildings constructed since 1960. With the completion of the Pricewaterhouse Coopers office building on the corner of Quay Street and Lower Albert Street, further development in this vicinity will entail redevelopment of existing sites.

Britomart Precinct, east of Queen Elizabeth Square, is comprised largely of low rise heritage buildings, many of which are protected by both District Plan schedules and the NZ Historic Places Trust register. The majority of these buildings form the perimeter framework for the Transport Centre and will be retained, restored and upgraded. Conservation plans have been prepared for 18 of these buildings with identified heritage significance and their restoration forms part of the contractual obligations on the titles of those sites.

The central portion will be completely new development above the new below-ground Railway Station. The whole precinct is flat and the traditional grid street pattern predominates and will be retained as the precinct is redeveloped. In this respect, it is clearly distinguished from the ridge and valley topography that dominates much of the rest of the city.



Aerial view of Britomart precinct within city context



Transport connections to and around the precinct