

3. PUBLIC SPACE

3.1 Public Space Network

There are three main types of space in a city: - public, semi-public and private. This document is concerned primarily with public and semi-public urban space.

Public and private spaces are inextricably interrelated and inevitably impact on each other. These Urban Design Guidelines indicate the layout and character of the public space network such as squares, streets, lanes, and arcades desired in the area. They also seek to direct private development to strengthen the public space network in a way that will achieve the full potential of this extremely valuable part of Auckland.

The desired public space network of the Britomart Precinct evolved from the 2000 Masterplan by Mario Madaayag Architecture and JASMAX. It has been designed to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) reinforce the traditional pattern and scale of development in the precinct
- (ii) reinforce the existing street network, adding lanes to improve pedestrian permeability and to better connect the precinct into the public space network of the surrounding city.
- (iii) to conserve and enhance view shafts through and within the area.

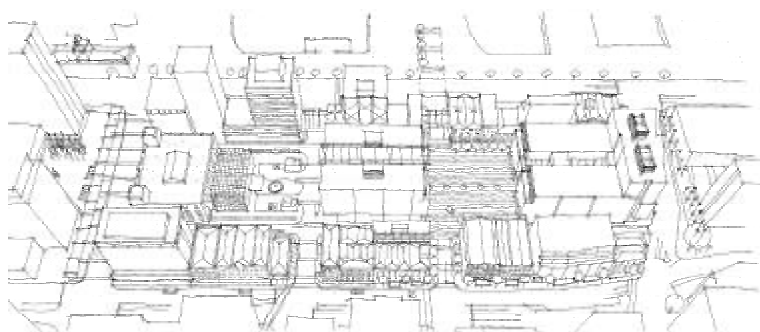
Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) maintain the high levels of physical and visual permeability and accessibility between the Precinct, the city and the waterfront as well as within the precinct itself.
- (ii) achieve permeability through heritage buildings on the precinct's perimeter, where noted in the conservation plans for each building.
- (iii) with the addition of the central walking street, Ta Huhu, maintain visual and pedestrian permeability through the site, terminating in the eastern facade and glasshouse of the CPO.



Reinforcing the traditional grid ensures that permeability and access to and around the precinct is maintained



Streets and squares create a network of public spaces throughout the precinct

3.2 Squares and Open Space

There are three main public squares in the Britomart Precinct. They are Queen Elizabeth Square, Station Plaza and Takutai Square.

Queen Elizabeth Square has an underground link to the railway station and provides for substantial bus activity along Queen Street to the east. The buildings abutting the Square are recent and new development is unlikely however any alterations to existing buildings should be in accordance with the guidelines.

Station Plaza is bounded by Tyler, Commerce and Galway Streets and the imposing 'Glasshouse' to the west. It is the centre of the transport function of the precinct and includes the handling of passengers entering and leaving the station in taxis and private cars. Development sites lie to the east of Station Plaza and the treatment of the west sides of these developments abutting Commerce Street is particularly important.

Takutai Square is more enclosed and envisaged as a venue for a range of temporary activities. Development sites surround this square and the precinct controls specify the treatment of facades facing the square, including activities and street amenity such as verandahs.

The Te Ara Tahuu (walking street) extends eastwards from Station Plaza to Britomart Place, providing for pedestrian through-traffic while stimulating lively and interactive private development on adjacent sites. Features of the walking street include the central row of light cones providing light to the tunnel below, and the proposed sliding glazed roof canopy above.



View from Takutai Square east along Galway Street showing ground floor activity relating to the public space

Urban Design Guidelines for Development Adjacent to Squares and Other Open Space

Development forming the built edges of open spaces should

- (i) maximise pedestrian accessibility into the space
- (ii) not dominate the space and not 'privatise' it by giving the impression that the space is a forecourt to the private development abutting it. The public should feel comfortable using any part of the space and should not be made to feel as if they are intruding on someone else's domain.
- (iii) establish (where relevant) a conscious alignment or presentation of any adjacent heritage building, respecting any significant axes, facades or prime views of such buildings.
- (iv) provide an architecturally varied edge to the space, composed of a high quality, elegant, and suitably durable façade made up of well proportioned and detailed elements.
- (v) provide the potential for all built edges to the space, to take on the character of a "grandstand", covered with people. Facades adjoining the space should have ground level windows and/or doors and upper-level balconies so that people inside the building can view events in the space.
- (vi) Structures (temporary or otherwise) erected in public space should:
 - be located in areas which are not subject to major pedestrian pathways as noted in Figure the District Plan Section 14.6.
 - be architecturally expressive of their temporary nature.
 - be simple in form, colour, and materials to place emphasis on the activities taking place.
 - complement, and contrast with, the architectural character of permanent buildings.
 - not intrude on any view shaft.



View from Commerce Street looking west along Galway

3.3 Streets and Lanes

Streets are the most ubiquitous spaces in cities. They are the corridors between the rooms. Buildings form the walls of these spaces and must be carefully placed to give the rooms a good shape. The lower floors of buildings are the parts that are most important because that is where pedestrians and shops are, and that is where the sense of the room is felt. Thus these guidelines are intended to direct the layout and shape of streets and lanes by defining the public space network and enhancing pedestrian activity.

The street pattern of the Britomart Precinct is a finely-grained grid and development should respect this. The historic pattern defines the scale and hierarchy of the streets and lanes, as well as the scale of buildings lining those streets. Customs and Quay streets are wide arterial streets, historically lined with four- or five-storey warehouses presenting their more formal and decorative fronts to the public realm. Tyler and Glaway were traditionally service lanes with the more informal, service side of the mercantile buildings. The north-south streets, Gore and Commerce link the precinct to the rest of the city and form an important part of the movement network, breaking up the length of the block to increase permeability.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) adhere to the desired dimensional characteristics of streets and lanes and their interrelationship, as key factors in the design of all landscape and building.
- (ii) ensure that streets are spatially well contained and well defined by buildings along their edges.
- (iii) avoid space 'left over' being visible from the public realm particularly where service vehicles access the building
- (iv) locate service access points and entrances to car parks away from pedestrian-comfortable retail street edges.
- (v) ensure refuse and service areas are screened from public spaces and pedestrian thoroughfares.
- (vi) utilise high quality ground surface materials for pedestrian pavements, and carriageways, consistent with the overall Britomart Precinct streetscape palette and quality.
- (vii) conflicts between servicing of buildings and the experience of the public realm can be minimised by:
 - locating access points away from pedestrian intensive areas
 - combining service access with car park access where possible, limiting the impact on pedestrian movement
 - house all rubbish containers and service areas so they are not visible from public spaces



View down TeArathuhu walking Street of similar scale & pedestrian planner as Vulcan Lan



Vulcan Lane - pedestrian dominance

3.4 Sight Lines / View Shafts

Sight lines, both from within the Britomart precinct, and into the area from outside, are a vital component of the character of the area. They are also an invaluable means by which linkages and connections may be made between the area and the Waitemata, as well as between the Central Area core and the harbour generally.

In order to protect views from public open space or along streets to the harbour, to Rangitoto Island and to the North Shore or to other natural features and landmarks from within the Central Area, the District Plan imposes restrictions on the intrusion of the sightlines by buildings or structures. Intrusions such as large trees and building projections (balconies, signs, etc) should be evaluated in each case. Enhancement may occur by way of framing, punctuating, or focusing on a view.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) protect, enhance, and open up view shafts and over public space along streets and lanes.
- (ii) take into account the relevant District Plan street sightlines, including the sightline No ? through the west-east axis of the Britomart Precinct, and No 19 from Customs Street looking north to the harbour.
- (iii) avoid obstructing views of the harbour, from any street or public space.



View shafts - framing or focusing a view

3.5 Ground Surfaces and Landscaping

Ground Surfaces

Ground surfaces are one of the three surfaces, which define the quality of a public space. The design of the ground surfaces, which includes the choice of materials and pattern of their layout is important.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) seek conformity of detail and material, where private developments can be integrated with street and adjacent public open space. The overall palette, quality, construction detailing and robustness must be consistent with the precinct streetscape plan, particularly the public spaces of Station Plaza, Te Ara Tahuhu (walking street) and Takutai Square.
- (ii) select materials for all components of street development (and maintenance) on the basis of the collective criteria of economy, serviceability, durability and appearance.
- (iii) design the ground surface so that the whole space retains its integrity and does not become dominated by the vehicle, in particular vehicle crossings across footpaths.
- (iv) minimise the slope and number of falls provided for the drainage of surface water.

Landscaping

Landscaping provides variety and richness in the urban fabric and complements the architectural environment at both the intimate and grand scale.

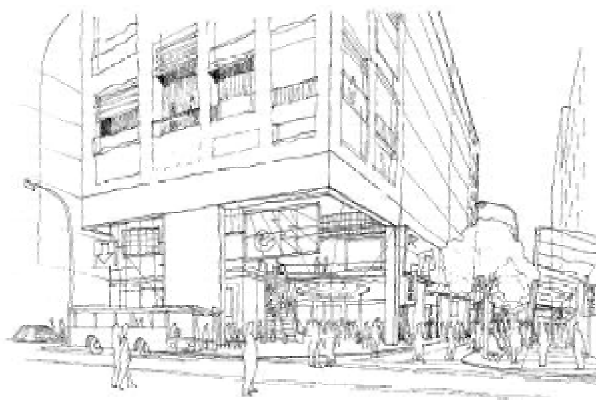
Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) Use the Auckland City planting specifications as guidelines to the appropriate standards for planting and maintenance of street trees.
- (iii) where appropriate, preference should be given to the use of native planting, using the Britomart Precinct streetscape plan and Auckland City street tree planting specifications as guidelines.



Existing view down Gore Street



Indicative view at showing upgraded streetscape.

3.6 Street Furniture and Signage

Street Furniture

Street Furniture includes a variety of public space paraphernalia, such as seats, litter bins, bollards, sign posts, signs and billboards, lamp posts, other lighting fixtures, drinking fountains, plant containers, flags, awnings, canopies, umbrellas, artworks and temporary structures.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) employ high quality durable street furniture, engineered to withstand normal conditions and treatment, in accordance with Auckland City's street furniture guidelines.
- (ii) determine the layout of street furniture by the plan form of and circulation patterns within the public space and entrances or key architectural features of buildings (particularly the heritage perimeter buildings). Such furniture should generally reinforce the periphery of the space, leaving the centre clear and free of clutter.
- (iv) ensure that bus shelters, kiosks, free-standing toilets conform with the standard downtown modules, (i.e. Adshel "Waitemata" series).
- (v) ensure that artworks, such as sculptures and water features conform to Auckland City's Public Arts Policy.

Signage

Signs contribute to the overall fabric of the urban environment, providing information for the public and embellishment of the architecture. Well designed signs are welcome elements. They should be an enhancement, not dominating or contrasting with the development. Within the Britomart Precinct wayfinding should conform with the standard regional transport branding and wayfinding modules (developed with the ARC) or the downtown standards developed by Auckland City community planning.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) ensure that signs are designed to a consistently high standard and complement the architectural qualities, materials, details and colours of the buildings to which they relate.
- (ii) avoid commercial signs and advertising on Heritage buildings, in line with the individual conservation plans, the District Plan and Bylaw constraints.
- (iii) exclude billboard type signs that draw the eye from vistas or buildings, and are not of pedestrian scale.
- (iv) minimise the number of sign posts by attempting to combine more than one sign or notice on to any one vertical support.

Bus Stops

The transport interchange function of the Britomart Precinct is one of the most important features and public streets and spaces should recognise this. Passengers will often set down from a terminal in one location and proceed to another. This transition should be assisted by covered ways, underpasses and signage.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) ensure that in public spaces no furniture, landscaping or signage should impede the free movement of public transport users.
- (ii) clearly demarcate the hierarchy of walking areas, pavements and waiting areas to avoid any conflict.
- (iii) ensure that the layout and exact position of bus stop furniture respects the geometry, architectural rhythms and entry points of any adjacent heritage buildings.

3.7 Lighting

This section refers to lighting provided by Council and others, for public spaces and the activities therein. The lighting of public places and their surrounding buildings is an integral part of any public space design. A variety of lighting devices, including floodlights and lamp posts, are appropriate.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) optimise public safety through lighting.
- (ii) use lighting to enhance and modulate the public environment for night time activity.
- (iii) carefully consider the type, placement, and quality of lighting as a fundamental design component, including lighting of building facades and details.
- (iv) vary lighting levels to suit various locations but without compromising security and safety through inadequate lighting or privacy and character through excessive or harsh lighting.
- (v) lighting on heritage buildings is subject to assessment in accordance with individual conservation plans
- (v) where the use of neon or coloured lighting is desired, ensure that its design and colour is integrated with the architecture to which it is attached and the activities to which it is drawing attention.
- (vi) recognise energy conservation by using fittings which do not waste light directly to the sky.

3.8 Verandahs

Verandahs are traditional elements of New Zealand street environments providing pedestrians with shelter from the sun, wind and rain. In most cases, the heritage buildings on the perimeter of the precinct were not built for retail use and did not have attached verandahs. Verandahs adjacent to heritage buildings must be in accordance with their individual conservation plans.

Urban Design Guidelines

Development should:

- (i) ensure that all verandahs are continuous along the length of the streets as noted in Plan C of the precinct controls.
- (ii) take into account that verandahs on heritage buildings are constrained by their individual conservation plans, the District Plan and that criteria may vary from the above general provisions.



Indicative view at corner of Galway & Gore Street showing verandahs and streetscape.