

4.0 Guideline Recommendations

4.1 General Townscape Environment

The following suggests key measures which should be considered, particularly during the assessment of applications for site development, in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the general townscape environment.

- Maintain the simple and legible town centre pattern and layout comprising a linear core shopping area, extensive car parking to the rear of the buildings and easy access for pedestrians via alleyways, lanes or the cross streets;
- Maintain the rear service lanes to allow vehicular access to shops' rears and the carpark areas;
- Maintain the brick alleyways and their safety lighting;
- Encourage building development on the Robbie Burns car park corner of Arthur Street and the Mall to strengthen the mall streetscape in this key entry point position;
- If and when dealing with a proposal for a 'big box' retail development seeking Mall frontage, ensure the frontage facade is of a scale and form appropriate to the character of the Mall, with the bulk of the store to the rear;

4.2 The Mall

4.2.1 New Development

(i) General

Poorly designed new commercial buildings along the Mall can act to downgrade the character created by early surrounding buildings and thus the streetscape as a whole. This can affect the vital commercial attractiveness of the town centre. The design of new commercial buildings does not need to be overly restricted. New buildings should respect the form and general design of adjoining buildings. There is no need to create fake heritage building styles. Rather, consideration should be given to blending in instead of designing buildings which are out of character with the streetscape.



New development which is out of character with the main features and detailing of adjacent existing buildings can greatly detract from the overall character of the streetscape.

(ii) Main Principles

Successful design for new development along the Mall involves respecting the context of the existing streetscape. The following guideline principles should be utilised to achieve this.

- Build up to the street frontage of the Mall for the full width of the site. A continuous building line with no setbacks aids in reinforcing the existing character of the streetscape;
- Consider the overall scale of the building. The district plan limits height in the zone to 12.5m, whilst the centre plan restricts height within 6m of the street frontage to the same height as adjoining buildings. This means additional stories will be stepped back;
- Provide for a verandah in the design at the same level and of a similar design to surrounding buildings;



New built development should respect the nature of the general Mall streetscape and reflect the scale, verandah, form and facade modulation styles of adjacent buildings

- Give due consideration to the front facade modulation of the building to increase visual interest and rhythm. Particular regard can be paid to the horizontal and vertical banding, as discussed below:
 - Pronounced horizontal bands visually demarcate the levels and lines of the facade and are achievable through utilising parapets, raised (and/or patterned) cornices, raised label moulding to the window line and with the use of a verandah;
 - Vertical banding can modulate the front facade into symmetrical components and is achievable through utilising pronounced bays, pilasters or recesses;

The figure provided at Section 3.1.4 can be used in reference to design issues discussed in this section.



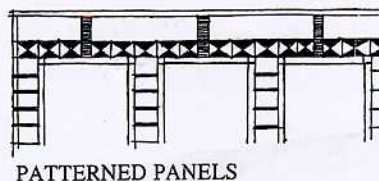
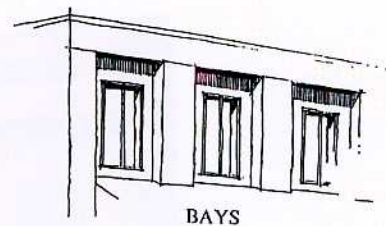
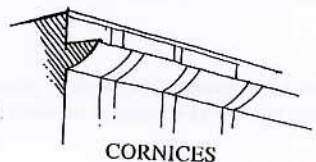
The facade of the BNZ building utilises similar horizontal and vertical banding to that of other, older buildings on the Mall. Thus whilst the building is obviously modern in design, it does not detract from the qualities of the streetscape.

- Provide window shapes, size, hierarchy and groupings in line with the pattern and symmetry used on surrounding buildings;
- Utilise exterior materials similar to surrounding buildings, particularly cement render or similar finishes;

(iii) Detailing

The use of appropriate detailing, colour, signage etc on new buildings can play a large part in enabling new development to add to the character of the Mall. In particular, large out of scale advertising signage and garish colour schemes may be deemed to be necessary along a busy arterial road but are excessive in the slower pedestrian environment of the Mall and can be greatly detractive to the streetscape as a whole.

- Provide for decorative detailing to the upper facade level. This might involve using raised, recessed or decorative panelling, cornices or stringcoursing, small stamped decorative motifs and the like;
- Under the verandah, consider utilising glazing bars to the shopfront windows and recessed doorways in a manner similar to the traditional Mall buildings;
- Utilise a restrained colour scheme in line with the colour schemes used on surrounding traditional buildings;



Again, the figure provided at Section 3.1.4 can be used in reference to design issues discussed in this section.

- Employ the use of different albeit sympathetic colours to pick out building features such as horizontal and vertical banding, windows, decorative detailing;
- Consider measures other than full frontage roller doors to respond to after hours security requirements on retail buildings. A streetscape of roller doors is obviously detractive to the visual interest of the Mall once retail stores close;
- Provide sufficient width to the verandah fascia to enable its use for advertising signage;
- Relate the design of fascia signs to the lines of the building, in a manner perhaps curved or horizontal depending on the building itself;
- Avoid the use of large out of scale signs which hide the architectural features of a building and detract from the streetscape;
- Avoid the wholesale painting of a building in a garish colour scheme which is at odds with the colours of the streetscape or ignores the architectural features of the building;

Below: An example of a colour scheme used on an early building in an Auckland streetscape similar to that of the Mall. The paintwork obscures the facade detailing and as a result detracts from the streetscape as a whole



Below: A successful example of front facade advertising : - signage is applied to the fascia, the design reflecting the form of the facade and clearly communicating the nature of the business to passers-by but not architecturally overpowering the building.



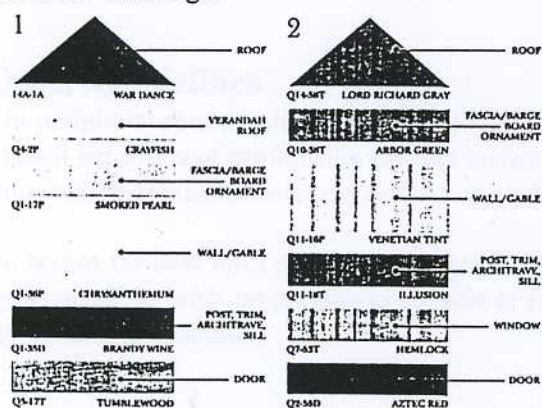
4.2.2 Early buildings

(i) General

Some of the early buildings of the Mall have been subject to unsympathetic changes as owners or tenants sought to maximise exposure and image in the marketplace by ad-hoc modernisation, garish colour schemes and/or extensive signage. The character of the early buildings plays a large part in giving the Mall streetscape its overall character. The incremental effect of small unsympathetic changes to buildings over time can detract from the overall streetscape character, and thus the vital commercial attractiveness which helps to draw in shoppers. Simple and appropriate measures are recommended below to maintain and enhance this character.

(ii) Maintaining the character of early buildings

- A primary principle of maintaining the character of the early buildings is the need to respect their architecture.
 - To a large part this can be achieved by:
 - not adding extensions or alterations which are out of scale, form, proportion or style with the original building;
 - not using modern, often supposedly lower maintenance materials such as aluminium joinery, artificial brick cladding, fibrolite, sheet metal and so on where the original fabric may have been brick or cement render;
 - not applying single paint colours to a whole upper facade thus obscuring the detailing the original designer utilised to make the building distinctive and interesting;
 - adequately maintaining or restoring the building elements;
- The use of appropriate colours can make a distinctive difference to the character of older buildings. While paint schemes vary for different periods, generally key elements of the shopfront and facade features such as horizontal and vertical banding, windows and decorative detailing were picked out in discrete yet complimentary colours. Several paint companies, most notably Wattyl, Levenes and Taubmans have developed good heritage colour scheme guides applicable to the various period styles. Although designed primarily for the residential paint market, the colour schemes recommended can be applied with equal success to the existing early Mall buildings and proposed new buildings.



Several paint companies have prepared good heritage colour schemes which are readily available from paint shops and can be applied to retail buildings.

- A second key principle in maintaining the character of early buildings is the retention of as much original building fabric as possible. Particular features to be retained where possible include original cladding, decorative detailing, verandah form, shopfronts and other materials. When replacement of elements is required, the aim should be a good match of material, form and profile. Avoid over decoration to produce fake 'colonial' images. Restoration can also be used as an opportunity to correct unsympathetic earlier building work.

4.3 The Periphery

4.3.1 General

The peripheral area has several vacant sites as well as an under utilisation of other sites, where for example truck parking and container storage occurs. Already somewhat incongruous with a town centre environment, economic forces resulting from rising land values are likely to eventually result in pressure to develop these sites. An opportunity now exists to provide for shaping a peripheral town centre environment which is both a good workplace and relatively attractive for Onehunga's residents. Design issues addressed in this section of the guidelines aim to build on those of the District and Centre Plans. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring new development in the peripheral area occurs in a manner which is supportive of pedestrian activity and safety.

4.3.2 The District Plan

The District Plan controls require new built development in the Business 4 zone to comply with the following provisions:

Height: 15m

Floor Area Ratio (Building floor area : site area) = 2 : 1

Bonus floor area is available for landscaped areas and plaza development, thus enabling construction up to a maximum 4 : 1 FAR.

4.3.3 The Centre Plan

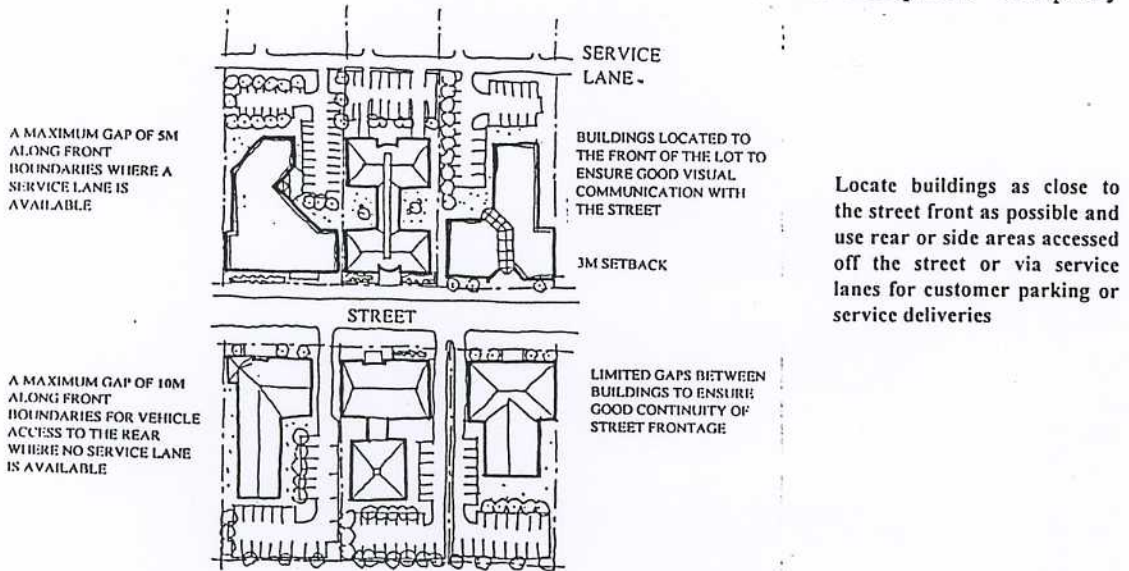
The Centre Plan is of limited application to the peripheral area. A landscaping control applies however which requires a 3 metre site setback between the road and new buildings with no less than 50 % of this area to be landscaped. Landscaping is to be in line with planting guidelines within the Mainstreet Plan (contact the Onehunga Mainstreet organisation - Tel: 6368535) and should involve utilising low shrubs and planting (under 1.5 m high) and /or trees with a clean trunk for the first 1.5 m.

4.3.4 Other Guidelines

Typically in peripheral commercial areas such as the Onehunga back streets, the planning focus is on vehicular based activity and minimising off-site environmental impacts. The following recommends several points which address streetscape and visual qualities in terms of pedestrian activity and safety.

- The site layout for new built development should have the building located as close to the street frontage as possible, with car parking to the side or rear only. Clear signage can be used to indicate that rear parking is available;

5.0 Further Information



Locate buildings as close to the street front as possible and use rear or side areas accessed off the street or via service lanes for customer parking or service deliveries

- New built development should avoid imposing blank windowless facades upon the streetscape. Thus walls facing the streetscape should feature windows and/or other display spaces to provide visual interest for street users. This also provides opportunity for connection to other activities, eg. retail;
- Verandahs, awnings and other measures creating visual interest for pedestrians and the general streetscape should be utilised in the design of new built development;



New built development can be designed to add to rather than ignore the quality of the streetscape

- Through site links for pedestrians should be encouraged at mid-block points or in order to join with existing pedestrian links serving as access between the Mall and the rear;
- Buildings on corner sites are important as landmarks and designs for such sites should address the corner, perhaps through a rounded design or by other means which reflect the junction of two streets.

5.0 Further Information

Council planning officers would be pleased to provide further information and/or will refer you to appropriate design experts.