Central Area Urban Design Guide Appendix 1 - Pipitea Precinct (Pi)

Applies Also to the Port Redevelopment Precinct – *('Pipitea' refers to the clear waters over the pipi beds*)

Contents

Introduction to the Appendix

This appendix offers general guidance to those undertaking public space development within the Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precincts.

The Pipitea Precinct Appendix is intended to be read in conjunction with the Central Area Urban Design Guide. That guide addresses design issues relating to the construction of new buildings, and additions and alterations to existing buildings. The Pipitea Precinct Design Guide addresses issues of public space structure and public space design.

This appendix covers two distinct areas; the Port Redevelopment Precinct and the Pipitea Precinct (see Section 2 for more specific details about the location and nature of these two precincts).

The public space and buildings within the area have the potential to affect a large number of people. One of the aims of these guidelines is to suggest design approaches which will prevent new developments from creating potentially adverse effects, not only for users of the central city but also for the wider community. The guidelines also acknowledge the important contribution the Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precincts make to the collective identity of Wellington City, and therefore the potential of any development in the area to enhance the wider city.

Pipitea & Port Redevelopment Precincts (amended map)

Definition of "Public Space" and "Public Space Structure"

The Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precincts are in private ownership. However if the precincts are developed for Central Area activities, any space to which the public has generally unrestricted access becomes public – in effect even if not in law.

For this reason, this appendix defines *public space* as all areas to which the public has access – including streets and accessways, pedestrian routes, squares and parks that are part of a private development. Similarly, public car-parking buildings, elevated plazas, walkways, bridges and underpasses are classed as public spaces.

This appendix applies, principally to the outdoor public spaces. Indoor public spaces such as car-parking buildings are covered by the Central Area Urban Design Guide.

Public space structure means the form and layout of areas of public space, including the linkages and connections that tie the public spaces together.

Intention

To enhance the city's public environment.

The configuration and qualities of the public environment contribute to people's perceptions of the city's pleasantness, functionality and liveability – positive and negative.

The public environment also shapes the city's fundamental commercial, social and cultural interactions. The formal qualities of the city and the success of the activities within it are thus inextricably linked.

The public environment

Context

Pipitea Precinct

This precinct comprises a large, relatively undeveloped area of land occupied principally by port and railway operations. These operations are expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

As a result of its use for port and rail activities, the precinct has relatively little building development and scant public space structure. The public space structure is limited to the streets along its perimeter, and thus the precinct contrasts with most other parts of the central city. Despite the arterial and principal roads along its boundaries, the centre of the precinct is currently not connected to the rest of the city.

Pipitea Precinct

Established buildings within and adjacent to the precinct include low and medium rise commercial development along Thorndon Quay; operational railway buildings including the station; and large plan, low rise, port-related warehouse buildings to the east and south.

The open nature of the precinct offers an unusual and significant development opportunity, and the chance to create a high quality urban environment "from the ground up".

The precinct occupies reclaimed land that covers areas of seabed significant to the manawhenua[1], and is adjacent to sites of early Maori settlement. The continuing cultural significance of these areas should be acknowledged in development.

Port Redevelopment Precinct

The Port Redevelopment Precinct is a significant area of reclaimed land between the High City of the downtown area, the port and rail land to the north and west, and the waterfront. It is part of the Low City situated on the lower slopes of the natural "amphitheatre" around the inner harbour.

Currently the area is perceived as isolated and exposed, containing a disjointed, low quality built form that reflects its history of port use. Large-scale heavy machinery is used there regularly, and access is restricted. Ground surfaces are expansive and robust, with large numbers of surface carparks occupying open space and security fences around the perimeter.

Lacking a public space structure, the area at present contrasts with most other parts of the central city. Moreover, because of the arterial road along its western boundary, the area is not well connected to the rest of the city.

Port Redevelopment Precinct

Established buildings within and adjacent to the area include both historic and more modern low rise port-related buildings; operational railways buildings, including the station; and large plan, low rise wharf buildings over the coastal marine area and on the container terminal area to the east and north.

The Port Redevelopment Precinct has been identified as being surplus to port requirements, although some port activities may continue in the precinct in the short to medium term.

CentrePort Ltd, which owns all the land and operates the port, has commissioned a masterplan for the long-term transformation of the area as it changes from active port to city precinct. This appendix reflects the basic concepts underpinning the masterplan and offers a flexible framework within which designers commissioned by CentrePort can work, and against which specific developments will be assessed. However, the appendix does not replace the masterplan. Rather, it sets out the urban design objectives and guidelines which Council wishes to ensure are achieved within the Port Redevelopment Precinct as it is progressively developed.

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[1] Customary authority and title over land and other taonga (treasures)

Guidelines for Public Space Structure

Significance of Public Space Structure

Public space structure is usually the first and most enduring, element of city design, persisting over time despite modification, demolition and renewal of buildings. For this reason it is important to carefully consider the design of public space structure, and consciously create the conditions and qualities considered necessary and desirable for the city.

Public space structure is also important because:

▪ it is essential to the city's accessibility, usability, and ability to change and develop over time

▪ by attracting users and activities, it encourages economic vitality and investment

High quality public space structure is especially important in the Pipitea Precinct and Port Redevelopment Precinct because of there location at the entrance to the city. A poor public environment could negatively affect the image and attractiveness of the city as a whole.

Attractive public environment

The following section covers six key design issues relevant to public space structure in the area, and provides objectives and guidelines for each.

1   Guidelines for Access

Analysis

The Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precincts, adjoining areas and the city as a whole will benefit if development within the precincts provides for future pedestrian and vehicle connections in appropriate locations. Greater accessibility will be achieved by:

▪ creating connections from the adjacent city

▪ creating interconnections within this very large part of the city

▪ providing for a wide range of modes of transport.

Pedestrian access

Pedestrian Priority

Promoting walking as the primary local transportation mode is consistent with the Council's aim of retaining Central Wellington's compact, contained physical character. This needs to be carefully considered and provided for within the structure of the public space system by:

- maximising opportunities for access from existing parts of the city

- frequent, convenient and direct connection to existing streets and pedestrian ways that meet the area

- creating public space that actively supports, rather than simply allows, access for people on foot

- requiring small blocks. City blocks[2] within Wellington's CBD are on average 55m by 80m. These blocks contrast with those on the Te Aro flat, which before being broken up with access and service lanes, averaged around 160m by 200m. Smaller blocks enhance pedestrian movement by creating additional options for movement and connectivity through the area. The blocks shown in the master-plan for the Port Redevelopment Precinct (Chapter 13, Appendix 02A) are considered appropriate for that area.

Public transport

Public Transport

While the potential for rail access is obvious, the public space structure should also have characteristics that permit effective and efficient operation of all public transport systems.

Safety

Safety and comfort are two important qualities for public space. Users will feel more confident of their safety if there is always a choice of routes for pedestrians, and if these routes are under informal surveillance from the activities at their edges. With multiple choices of routes, the direction of any one pedestrian is less predictable and pedestrians may alter their route to avoid entrapment should they feel threatened by anything along the way.

Integration of Modes of Access

As a general principle, use of public space by a variety of transport forms should be promoted. Pedestrians, vehicles and cycles may occupy different carriageways within the same space. Under certain conditions and with careful detailed design, different modes of transport may share the same carriageway. This principle does not apply to the motorway or railway lines where, for reasons of safety, only single modes of access are permitted.

Integration of transport modes

Alternatively, vehicle traffic may be restricted or excluded from public open spaces intended for intense public occupation. Such

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[2] A block is a defined area bounded by publicly accessible accessways or streets. It may be, but is not necessarily, rectilinear. It can be of any shape that is consistent with other guidelines, particularly those relating to visual reference and orientation, and that supports a coherent comprehensive public space concept for the area.

spaces include lanes, squares, parks, streets or parts of streets. It is appropriate to totally exclude vehicles from a space only if this enhances vitality, activity and safety within the space and throughout the development as a whole.

Objectives

(PI) O1.1 To promote walking as the primary local transportation mode.

(PI) O1.2 To provide convenient and extensive opportunity for pedestrian access to and from all parts of the surrounding city, particularly the central city and waterfront.

(PI) O1.3 To provide a choice of safe, convenient access routes within the area for all modes of transport.

(PI) O1.4 To allow for the extension of all public transport networks into the area.

Guidelines

Connection to the City

(PI) G1.1 Provide frequent connections to the street system adjacent to the area. These should be at convenient intervals and give pedestrians access to the streets adjoining the area, even when vehicle access is not possible. The intervals may be variable, and located to meet likely pedestrian demand. They may average in the order of 80 - 100 metres.

(PI) G1.2 Extend pedestrian access into the area from streets, public spaces and other routes that currently terminate at the boundary.

Access Within the Area

(PI) G1.3 Keep blocks as small as possible to give pedestrians convenient access within the area.

(PI) G1.4 Consider providing pedestrian through-access where:

- the longest dimension of a block is more than 120 metres

- development is of a type that will both allow and support pedestrian through-access

- such access provides a beneficial link between two destinations.
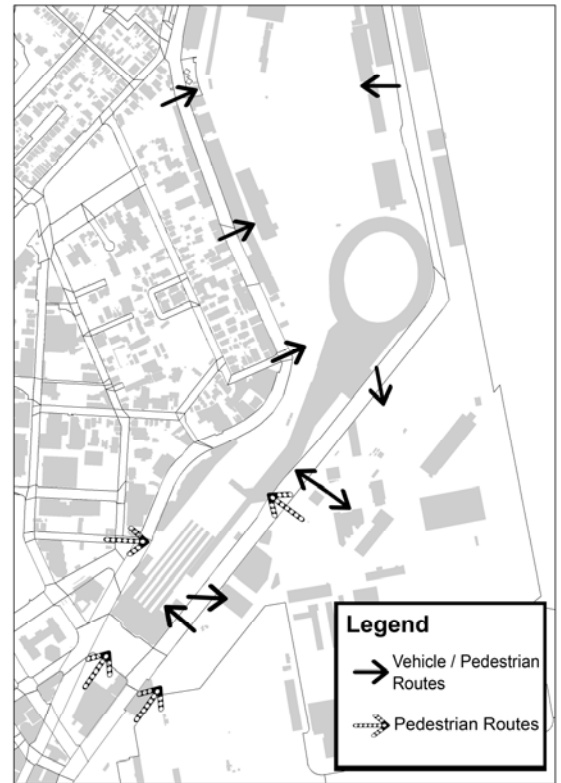
Connection to the city

(PI) G1.5 Provide alternative pedestrian routes into, out of, and through all publicly accessible open spaces to minimise the possibility of entrapment. These will be separate from any routes provided through buildings during the hours when the buildings are open.

(PI) G1.6 Allow for the street and open space structure to be used by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, providing different carriageways or surfaces as necessary for safety.

(PI) G1.7 Generally eliminate private motor vehicles from in "destination" spaces (such as public squares, retail malls, or parks) and along narrow accessways where the clear primary purpose and benefit is pedestrian connection. However, a linear park along the edge of a street may be more vibrant and secure if there are people in cars close by on the adjacent streets.

Extend pedestrian access routes

(PI) G1.8 Provide a balance of vehicle and pedestrian access within the area. Pedestrian-only public spaces should be limited in extent and carefully located in areas of high user demand to ensure maximum occupation and vitality.

(PI) G1.9 Plan to allow the current or future integration of public transport networks to service the area and connect to both the central city and suburbs.

(PI) G1.10 Ensure that the needs of cyclists are considered and provided for, including by extending cycling routes through to the city centre.

Routes Through Buildings

(PI) G1.11 Any routes through buildings should complement the open space structure rather than compete with it for use and activity. This may be achieved by:

- maintaining generally unrestricted public access through ground floors of the buildings.

- ensuring that blank facades or building backs are not presented to adjoining public spaces outside the building.

"Destination" space

2   Guidelines for Visual Reference and Orientation

Analysis

How people perceive and experience the city's public space is determined by the shape of the public space structure and the buildings that define those spaces. Buildings, streets, paths and defined edges between activities help people to orientate themselves. In this section, guidelines indicate how the space structure of the area may be designed to be understandable for users, especially by:

▪   maintaining the high city/low city urban form

▪   developing a strong sense of place through memorable public open spaces and appropriate landmark development that enhances the experience of entering the city.

Visual Reference

The precincts form an identifiable part of the central city, located on a flat reclaimed area in the foreground of the "High City" as approached from the north. It is situated on the city side of the motorway, which is a clear demarcation point between suburban residential and central city commercial activity. Accordingly, the geometric qualities of its space structure and the resulting urban form should relate to the central city rather than to suburban models.
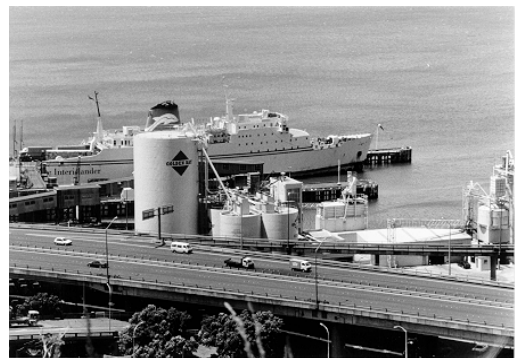
Orientation

Explicit signage plays a part in assisting people to orientate themselves. However, the visible form and character of the city itself should indicate location and direction.

User orientation and comprehension of the city can be enhanced by developing the character of areas and important elements within them so as to differentiate them from other areas. Methods include visually enhancing important buildings, and the bold and memorable treatment of important intersections and public spaces. Visual continuity of arterial routes leading to and through the city also gives clear direction and assists with orientation.

The Pipitea Precinct's position as the *entrance to the* city is an especially important consideration. The area needs to help create a sense of arrival. This will not happen if it is homogeneous, uneventful, and lacking an identity or sense of place.   More positive perceptions can be created by a contrast between built-up street edges and more open views, and by the experience of leaving the high-speed motorway and entering the realm of city streets.

A full sense of arrival or departure is realised when either the centre of the city is reached or its outskirts left behind, but only if the traveller has registered the experience of movement. The experience of entering Wellington occurs along defined routes, and this experience will be enlivened by accentuating the sense of progression along these routes. Ways to achieve this include:

Landmark structures as reference points

▪   manipulating townscape elements, to emphasise differences along the way or to express elements such as prominent buildings or structures that contrast significantly with their surroundings. Examples found near this area are silos and wharf cranes.

▪   reinforcing the local identity of the areas beside existing entrance routes

▪ emphasising the special character of key intersections, or prominent buildings.

Such measures prompt users to anticipate and perceive change as they pass through the area. This makes entering the city a richer and more memorable experience as it gradually unfolds to offer a sense of discovery and revelation.

Objectives

(PI) O2.1 To assist user orientation and understanding of the city.

(PI) O2.2 To enhance the experience of entrance to the city.

Guidelines

Visual Reference

(PI) G2.1 Use the traditional geometric characteristics of the port and the public space structure within the existing Central Area of the city as precedents from which to develop a public space structure. Doing so would clearly define the area as part of the central area, not a suburban area.

Visual links assist orientation

(PI) G2.2 Develop a strong and memorable image/identity for the area that complements the urban form and character of the CBD.

Orientation

(PI) G2.3 Develop vistas along streets that indicate to people where they are, by revealing important landmarks and creating a memorable sense of place.

(PI) G2.4 Consider spatial differentiation, within the framework of a coherent public space structure for the area as a whole, as a means of assisting orientation.

(PI) G2.5 Provide clear visual and physical links between the city and the Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precincts. This would ensure that routes are not only present but visible, and destinations are obvious – for example, by aligning important pedestrian routes to give a clear view of destination.

(PI) G2.6 Visually emphasise important public buildings as landmarks. This might be achieved by contrasts in scale, form, character, or building type.

Wayfinding

(PI) G2.7 Make it easy for people to find their way by:

- developing an understandable hierarchy of path widths and spatial differentiation
- providing visible continuity of path features – including street trees and landscaping, and street furniture
- keeping main routes direct and simple
- providing good directional signs
- providing signs that identify major buildings and open spaces.

Entrance Enhancement

(PI) G2.8   Develop landmark buildings in significant locations along the main entrance routes to the city.

(PI) G2.9   Treat buildings that serve an important public function, or are destinations for large numbers of people, as focal points or landmarks. These should differ in some significant way from their context to achieve the necessary visual contrast.

(PI) G2.10 Create memorable visual rhythms with buildings – including by modulating large elements on them – to create visual interest for observers moving along entrance routes.

Landmark structures on entrance routes

3   Guidelines for Robustness

Analysis

"Robustness" is the provision of qualities that allow for future change and development. Robust public space structure in the Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precinct's will ensure they can readily adapt to multiple and changing activities.
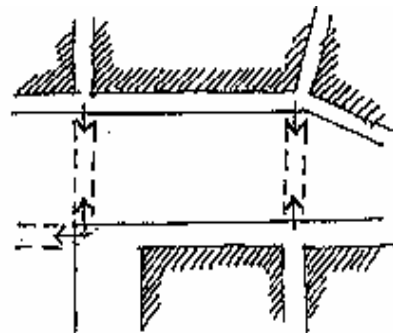
Both the configuration and the quality of the public space structure contribute to its ability to support changing activities. Designing for robustness involves meeting the often unpredictable functional needs of various user groups and different modes of transport, both now and in the future.

Objectives

(PI) O3.1   To facilitate expansion and addition that may occur as a result of future incremental development of the area.

(PI) O3.2   To support multiple activities and changing land use.

Guidelines

(PI) G3.1   When extending access lanes or streets into the area, terminate these in a way that allows extension and access to future development. At the same time, ensure that the facades of buildings facing these public spaces have qualities that support a vital public environment.

(PI) G3.2   Site and align vehicle circulation routes to connect into nearby streets.

Potential for connection

(PI) G3.3   Where the constraints of the current roading hierarchy prevent vehicle access to existing streets, consider the potential for increased vehicle access in future. Where appropriate, provide access routes that could be easily modified or extended to give future

vehicle connection to these streets.

(PI) G3.4   Develop all routes to facilitate pedestrian access.

(PI) G3.5   Locate buildings in any partial development of the area so that the width of routes and spaces allow a street system to be developed in future. This width should reflect the significance of the route within the access hierarchy.

Mixed use streets

4   Guidelines for Spatial Variety and Hierarchy

Analysis

The City Gateway's streets and other public spaces should be integrated into and complement the city's existing hierarchy. The different spaces comprising that hierarchy offer users a wide variety of spaces and possible experiences.

Spatial Variety

It is possible to develop a wide range of public space types with varying characteristics within this area. Because streets form the basis of the city's existing public space structure, they are likely to be the primary public space form within the City Gateway. Other spaces include squares and parks: these may be designed in many configurations, in combination with streets.

The provision of spatial variety recognises that the public space structure should be able to serve several functions, in addition to access. Carefully placed and well-designed squares allow the public to meet and gather, while parks allow recreation and provide visual contrast with other parts of the city dominated by buildings. Spatial variety also reflects different kinds of use, including different uses by vehicles and pedestrians.

An appropriate mix of spaces, if well located and carefully designed, enriches user experience of the city and supports the varying private land uses and activity that are a primary reason for its existence.

The width of streets and size of public spaces will determine whether or not they are perceived as being active, vital and well-used – or vacant and barren.

Context

To promote a variety of experiences and to assist user orientation, each public open space within the area should have its own distinctive character. Each should also appear to be part of an ordered, integrated and conceptually complete system of open

space and buildings that extends across the whole area.

The location of buildings should respond to the required characteristics of urban structure and form. Moreover, buildings should define public open space in a way that achieves enclosure and spatial diversity appropriate to the specific local context, and to the area as a whole.

Hierarchy

Streets and other public open spaces have different primary functions, and this will be recognised in the design of the public space structure. Some streets may be primarily orientated to high speed traffic or to pedestrians, while others may attract and integrate both vehicle and pedestrian use. Some spaces may have special or destination qualities, while certain pedestrian routes may be intended to provide access only.
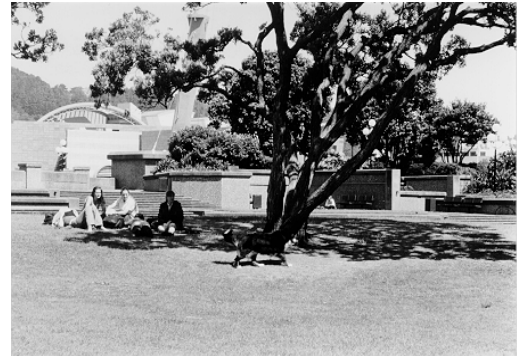

Spatial variety

Relation to the Established Hierarchy of the City

The streets that bound and traverse the area are important routes that extend into the city (e.g. Thorndon Quay) or through the city (e.g. Aotea and Waterloo Quays). The development of such streets should ensure that their width and visual character are appropriate to their roles, and also reinforce their identity and connection with the centre of the city.

The central city has significant public open spaces such as Civic and Queens Wharf Squares, and Midland and Frank Kitts Parks. These are of a size appropriate for their expected use, are located in densely occupied parts of the city, and serve particular recreational and civic functions. Public spaces such as squares and parks within the Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precincts should recognise the role of these existing spaces and complement them.
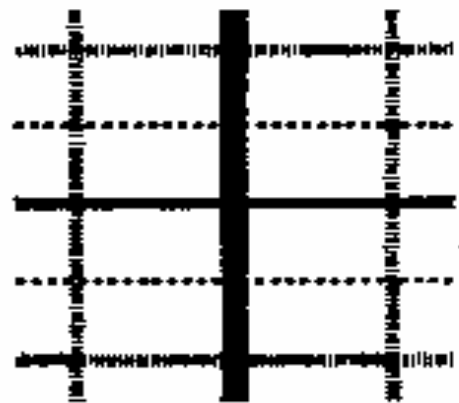
Spatial hierarchy

Objectives

(PI) O4.1 To complement the existing public space structure of the city.

(PI) O4.2 To develop a range of streetscapes in a hierarchy that complements the pattern of the central city.

Thorndon and Waterloo Quays

Guidelines

(PI) G4.1   Provide a variety of public space types and sizes.

(PI) G4.2   Develop streets as the primary element of the space structure. Squares and parks are secondary elements.

(PI) G4.3   Develop variety in the way detailed design and streetscape elements are enclosed and integrated into different spaces. This provides local differentiation, in a way that maintains a clear sense of place in the hierarchy of public open space.

(PI) G4.4   Create the highest quality destinations for pedestrians in areas and streets where buildings and activities offer the maximum opportunity for public space vitality.

(PI) G4.5   Develop a consistent hierarchy of public space that is integrated with the structure of the city. This requires that the width of streets reflects their role in the roading hierarchy and provides the necessary standard of vehicle access. It also requires that other public spaces are of a size and type that complements existing spaces within the city.

Street as the primary element of the public space structure

Guidelines for Public Space Design

5 Guidelines for Public Space Quality

Analysis

In contrast with most other parts of the city, development within the Pipitea and Port Redevelopment Precincts will create public spaces where none previously existed. The qualities of these open spaces and their relationship to each other are critical issues to be considered in the site planning of every development within the area.

To create successful spaces, it is important to consider their form and design at the same time as the siting and form of buildings. Buildings and large landscape elements define urban spaces like walls, and the quality of the connection between building interiors and adjacent open space is fundamental in determining the character of that space.

People and activity in public open space

The visual character of the area, and the public environment's level of amenity are primarily determined by the range and mix of uses within and at the edges of public open space.

These guidelines aim to achieve a public environment that is vital, safe and attractive. This will provide the context in which commercial activity can flourish.

Positive Open Space - Spatial Definition

Successful public spaces are not simply the leftover spaces between buildings. Rather, they are positively defined by buildings or other significant enclosing elements, and are planned in conjunction with the buildings that are sited to define and support them.

Defining space requires the designer to consider both the positioning and the relative heights of adjacent buildings. The appropriate building-height-to-public-space-width ratio may change, depending on the type of space and the specific situation.

Buildings are most effective in defining a three-dimensional space if they are reasonably similar in height. Extreme variation in building height around a space often gives poor spatial containment.

Spatial definition

Development of a Sense of Place

Spatial definition and variety allows a sense of place or local character to be developed within each space. For users, this assists orientation and enriches the experience of occupying and moving through the area.

Positive recognition of the history of a site, particularly its cultural significance to manawhenua, also enriches public spaces and helps develop local character and a distinct sense of place.

Sunshine

The combination of sunshine and shelter is a key ingredient of successful open space in Wellington. People are attracted to sunny outdoor spaces and are less likely to use those that are shaded. Consideration should be given to the time of day a given public open space will be used most, with the aim of optimising sun exposure for that time.

Sense of place

Visual Complexity

A lack of articulation, modelling or fine detail in the design of public spaces may leave them visually impoverished. Such barren environments do not invite use.

The scale and level of detailing, and the degree of visual complexity appropriate in any location depends on the observer's distance and speed of travel. Maximum visual complexity is appropriate in pedestrian oriented spaces, and at the base of buildings that define pedestrian spaces or street edges. Where a route is experienced only at speed (such as the motorway), fine-grained detail becomes unimportant as there is only time to appreciate the large scale patterns of streetscape elements (such as trees) or building massing.

It is especially important to avoid visual clutter that diverts drivers' attention from a high speed or demanding road.

Detail and visual complexity

Vitality at the Edges of Space

A necessary ingredient of successful public open space is appropriate visual and physical linkage between the interiors of buildings and public open space.

The edges of spaces frequently used by pedestrians need frequent connections with the interiors of buildings. Such linkages are less important in service lanes and at the edges of streets dedicated vehicle traffic routes. Thus, the intended pedestrian usage and place of a street in the hierarchy of public space should be considered in determining the appropriate degree of visual and physical connection.

Visual and physical links enrich the public environment. A building facade characterised by windows and doors at ground level, as well as windows above, is visually interesting. Assuming competent architectural composition, such a façade is generally more pleasing as a backdrop to public open space than a facade without openings. Moreover, being able to see what is happening inside a building also helps people understand the

pattern of activity within the city, and assists orientation..

Robustness

Activity and the presence of people gives vitality to public space. The edges of buildings and elements within public space should be designed to facilitate the widest possible range of activities.

Providing settings that respond to the informal and often unpredictable demands of a wide range of people can greatly improve public amenity and contribute to the vitality of the public environment. Possible activities should include all those typically seen on city streets, and might also include performance art, streetside vending, public meetings and other events. The design of the environment should not be so rigid as to exclude these and other unforeseen activities.

Robustness at the street edge

Objectives

(PI) O5.1 To develop memorable, well-defined "positive" open spaces.

(PI) O5.2 To develop a strong local identity or sense of place

(PI) O5.3 To encourage intensive public use and the quality of vitality in important public spaces.

(PI) O5.4 To provide public spaces which are comfortable and safe.

(PI) O5.5 To accommodate a wide and changing range of user activities.

Guidelines

Positive Open Space - Spatial Definition

(PI) G5.1 Position buildings at the edges of streets and other public spaces to positively define those spaces.

(PI) G5.2 Design spaces with a cross-sectional height-to-width ratio appropriate to their plan form and type.

(PI) G5.3 Define public spaces with buildings or appropriate landscape elements of similar height. Aim to limit variation in building height at the edges of public spaces (except for appropriately sited and scaled landmark elements) to around one third.

Positive open space

Sense of Place

(PI) G5.4   In designing spaces, make reference where appropriate to the history and cultural significance of the site. This might be by highlighting physical traces of the past (where they exist); by artistic interpretation in form, space or detail; or in the naming of areas, streets and spaces.

(PI) G5.5   Design open spaces to complement those found in the central city. At the same time, they should develop a unique sense of place appropriate to their local context.

Visual and physical connection

Encouraging Use and Vitality

(PI) G5.6   Maximise the physical and visual connection between building interiors and adjoining public spaces.

(PI) G5.7   Avoid the dilution of public space use and consequent reduction in vitality that results from grade separation of pedestrians.

(PI) G5.8   Articulate public spaces with rich detail, and with components and elements appropriate to their function and to observers' location and speed of travel. .

Comfort and Safety

(PI) G5.9   Carefully place tall buildings so that all squares, parks, plazas and parts of streets designed to encourage occupation receive good sun exposure for as long as possible during the day. The two hours from noon until 2.00pm are especially important.

(PI) G5.10 Provide shelter for pedestrians along the main accessways to and through the area, including by means of colonnades and verandahs.

(PI) G5.11 Provide opportunity for formal or informal public seating in areas with good sun exposure.

(PI) G5.12 Apply the Guidelines for Design Against Crime (appended to the District Plan) to the design of all public spaces within the area.

Robustness

(PI) G5.13 Design public spaces to support a wide range of possible activities.

Well-appointed, comfortable public open spaces

6   Guidelines for Components and Elements

Analysis

The nature of a street or other public space is initially determined by its connection to other parts of the city and by its configuration, level of enclosure and microclimate. However, its character and physical amenity will be shaped by the components and elements within it.

Usability of Public Spaces

Various components and elements are crucial in making public spaces comfortable and attractive for public use. Some – such as surfaces, kerbs and crossings – are essential parts of the construction. Others are additions or accessories that serve necessary amenity and safety functions, or simply make public spaces more attractive and convenient to use.

These guidelines focus particularly on the needs of the pedestrian. The creation of an entire new environment offers an opportunity to create public spaces of an appropriately high quality. But it also offers the chance to , enhance accessibility for the disabled and people pushing prams or in wheelchairs, through the detailed design of crossings and paths

Usable public spaces

Visual Consistency

Successful urban environments tend to be characterised by visual diversity within a framework of unity. That is, components and elements belong to a family that is common to the city as a whole, but are used in combinations or in ways that gives local character. This allows local identity to develop, ensures connection with the city as a whole, and avoids arbitrary and confused visual effects. Consistent with the criteria outlined in Section 3.2 Guidelines for Visual Reference and Orientation, it is important that the components and elements used are visually consistent with positive precedents that exist within the Central Area.

Street Furniture

Street furniture includes lighting standards, directional signs, bicycle racks, planters, rubbish receptacles, tree grates and enclosures, railings and balustrades. Other important elements include public toilets, bus shelters and canopies over pedestrian routes.

Street furniture

The selection of street furniture can enhance the identity of the area and the city as a whole. For this reason, furniture should be consistent with patterns existing in the central city, except where an existing precedent is utilitarian and does not contribute to the city's identity or physical and visual amenity.

Streets also gain character where the activities that line their edges are extended into the public open space. Examples include street-side displays of retail goods, vendor stands or carts, and cafe chairs and tables. The design of the edges of public spaces should encourage such activity.

Lighting

Lighting can create special night-time effects within the area. While strictly functional lighting may be needed to meet traffic safety standards, specially designed lighting is desirable in many pedestrian-orientated spaces – particularly those that are important public destinations.

Consideration should be given not only to the night-time lighting effect, sometimes described as the "nightscape", but also to the day-time appearance of lighting standards. These may also be used to support banners or signs to enrich the public environment.

Lighting

Art Installations

Art installations help develop a sense of place and provide additional visual interest. They can include sculptures, pavement inlays, temporary displays and performance art. The configuration of space should allow opportunity for performance art to occur in suitable locations.

Art installation

Trees

Trees can be used to enclose spaces, to integrate nature into the urban environment, and to give richness and complexity to the streetscape.

If the tree species within the area contrast with trees in suburban and natural surroundings, this can help indicate a sense of arrival in the centre of the city. Indigenous trees tend to be informally grouped on the hills surrounding the harbour, while formal planting of generally exotic trees characterises the city centre. Because many trees within the city are deciduous, the progression of the seasons is highly visible: it also means public spaces with trees enjoy maximum sun during the winter.

Objectives

(PI) O6.1 To contribute to the development of the distinct identity of Wellington city.

(PI) O6.2 To achieve visual consistency and unity within the city as a whole, while at the same time developing the unique physical and visual qualities of the area.

(PI) O6.3 To contribute to a visually complex and interesting public environment which has a high degree of functional amenity.

Guidelines

General

(PI) G6.1 Co-ordinate all elements and components to achieve consistency within the area and with the city. Local variations can be introduced to reflect local conditions and achieve visual richness.

Paving / Surfaces

(PI) G6.2 Articulate paving in pedestrian areas with contrasting patterns or materials. Areas dedicated to vehicle and cycle use should be paved with homogeneous, monolithic materials.

(PI) G6.3 Clarify the status and intended use of different paving surfaces. Surfaces should be clearly differentiated to signal whether they are for use by pedestrians or vehicles, or for shared use.

(PI) G6.4 Paving patterns should always be integral to the overall design concept of any public space. Two-dimensional patterns in paving should reinforce, and be reinforced by, three-dimensional elements and relationships to the surrounding buildings.

Trees and Planting

(PI) G6.5 Use species typically associated with the built environment rather than those found in the region's natural environment.

(PI) G6.6 Achieve aesthetic coherence by using consistent species of street trees within any one street. These may be distinctly different trees from those used in other streets, to give a unique sense of place. Alternatively, using the same species can visually emphasise physical connection.

(PI) G6.7 Streets used chiefly by pedestrians and where high speed traffic is discouraged can be given a "stop-go" character by planting trees in irregular rhythms and spacing. Conversely, planting trees in a continuous even rhythm (and at greater spacing than in pedestrian and local streets) is appropriate along through-streets that tend to be experienced at speed.

(PI) G6.8 Locate suitable trees and planting to maintain sightlines and visibility, thereby promoting safety for all street users.

Street Furniture

(PI) G6.9 Consider both utility and appearance in the design and selection of all street furniture. The dominant visual criteria should be visual consistency within the

Paving pattern delineates use

Paving develops sense of place

area, and with the central city as a whole.

Structures

(PI) G6.10 Utilise, develop or design structures such as public toilets, canopies and bus shelters that contribute to the amenity of the city. These should develop the unique character of Wellington city, be functionally well designed, and aesthetically appropriate to central city use.

Lighting

(PI) G6.11 Design lighting to achieve special effects along important pedestrian routes and in important spaces. For example, important landmark structures might be floodlit or spotlit, or contrasting lighting might be used to give visual emphasis.

(PI) G6.12 While utilitarian streetlights may be appropriate in streets that have a predominant service function, more detailed and sophisticated streetlights can enhance the appearance of important streets and spaces both night and day.
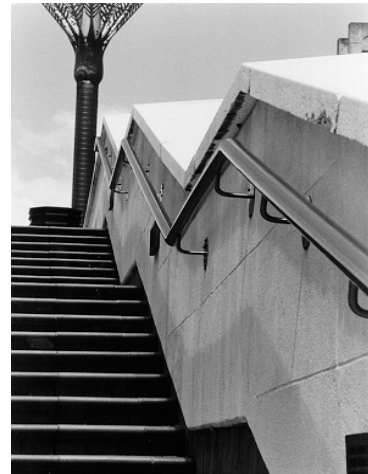
Constructional Detail

(PI) G6.13 Develop edges of spaces and buildings to allow informal opportunities for seating, in addition to any formal seating provided. Examples include steps, planter edges or low walls in sunny locations at the edges of spaces. At least, the configuration of surfaces should not preclude opportunity for seating.

(PI) G6.14 Develop constructional details which contribute visual interest to areas used heavily by pedestrians, and which can be consistently used throughout the area. Details may be more utilitarian in service areas, and those areas experienced almost exclusively from vehicles.

Public Art

(PI) G6.15 Consider installing substantial public art, such as a highly visible sculpture or fountain as the focus of a public open space or as an event along well travelled paths.

(PI) G6.16 Utilise streetscape elements as opportunities to integrate art and design – for example, light standards designed to accommodate banners. This integration is most appropriate in areas frequented by pedestrians.

Lighting for special effect

Constructional detail

Public art as play structure

7   Guidelines for Public Space Types

Analysis

This section deals with design criteria specific to various types of public open space.

Streets

The street is the primary space form of Wellington City. Streets are more than conduits for traffic; they are important public spaces which allow significant opportunity for activity and social interaction.

Successful streets are usually characterised by edge definition. Their edges encourage use by pedestrians by providing activity, visual vitality and shelter.

Streets range in type from the grand boulevard which announces the entrance to the city (for example, Aotea and Waterloo Quays), to the lane providing local access to activities and pedestrian interconnection. In all of these, pedestrian access should be encouraged in addition to convenient, safe and efficient access for other modes of transport.

Streets are likely to have differing widths and modes of use, depending on their place within the hierarchy of the public space structure and their relation to other streets and types of public space. Consequently, appropriate edge treatment and the extent to which vehicles and/or pedestrians are accommodated may vary.

Pedestrian Routes

Pedestrian routes are those limited to pedestrian access. These may be open, or partially through buildings.

Squares

Squares are pedestrian-oriented destination spaces with rectangular rather than linear configuration, including plazas related to individual buildings. This definition also covers parts of streets which – by virtue of their geometry, width, alignment and the public significance of adjacent activity – become spatially defined and identifiable destinations. Squares tend to be destinations where people pause and spend time, and where public events are likely to occur.

Successful squares are characterised by:

- spatial definition

- sunshine

- activity around the edges

- views in and out

- connection with other spaces

- a distinctive feature or focal point

- obvious use and activity, which requires that their maximum dimensions be carefully considered relative to their expected

occupancy.

Parks

Parks are spaces of retreat, typically green and dominated by planting. They give opportunity for rest and relaxation, create places suitable for informal gatherings and public events, and provide visual relief from the predominantly hard-surfaced appearance of the rest of the central city.

The quality of the parks created is more important than outright area. Urban parks can be very small – the "pocket park" such as Midland Park – and still make a major contribution to the quality of the city. Successful urban parks typically attract many people and a favourable microclimate, spatial definition and memorable character. They are rarely successful if conceived as amorphous left-over space around buildings. Poorly located areas unsuitable for other uses are unlikely to develop into successful parks either.

Objectives

(PI) O7.1 To develop all types of public space with high levels of visual and physical amenity in order to support public use.

(PI) O7.2 To treat streets and street edges as essential elements of the public environment.

Guidelines

Streets

(PI) G7.1 At street edges, locate buildings of sufficient height to give a street edge height-to-street -width ratio of not less than 1:2. It is acceptable to achieve greater definition by placing defining buildings closer together. Rows of street trees can be used to subdivide wider streets in order to achieve spatial definition and enclosure.

(PI) G7.2 Develop the edges of main arterial routes skirting the area so that they have a distinctive and attractive visual quality appropriate to their role as main entrance routes to the city.
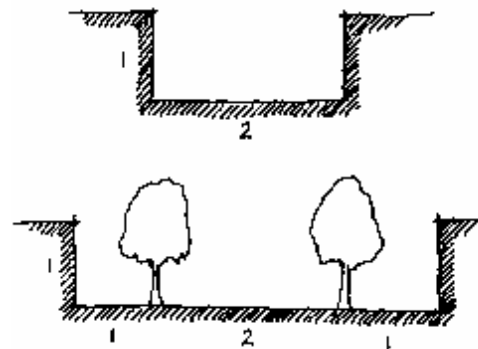
(PI) G7.3 Provide pedestrian access along the edges of all streets, except where a high speed traffic environment precludes this for safety reasons.

Spatial definition of streets

Squares

(PI) G7.4 Squares should be situated:

- in locations that serve a substantial population within close walking distance (approximately 300m)

- to receive maximum year-round sunshine.

- where publicly accessible activities will occur at the base of buildings that define the space.

(PI) G7.5 Avoid creating squares with a maximum dimension greater than 100m – unless the particular use of the space requires greater size, or the density of population in the immediate area necessitates greater space provision.

(PI) G7.6 Configure squares with typical height to width ratio in the range 1:3-1:4. This gives positive definition and containment, but also provides spatial contrast with adjacent streets and the openness needed for sun penetration.
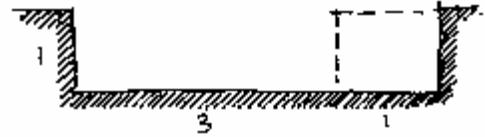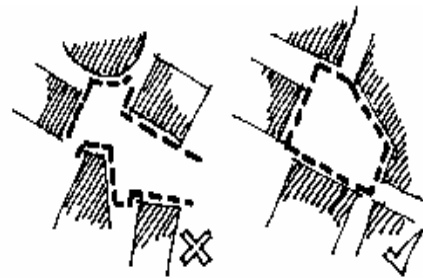
Spatial definition of squares

(PI) G7.7 Strongly define the edges of squares to give enclosure, wherever possible maintaining the continuity of edge definition. The exception is where a space opens to the sea or to a panoramic view of an area of similar significance or value, and thereby gains character from this connection with larger spaces beyond the area.
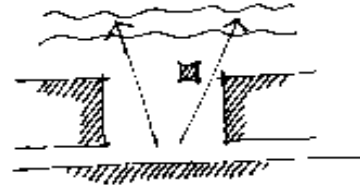
Enclosure

(PI) G7.8 Shape squares and similar spaces to be relatively simple in form, and easily experienced from most points within them. Spaces that are complicated, amorphous and ill-defined generally lack a strong sense of place.

(PI) G7.9 Create subspaces within and at the edges of large squares to provide a variety of settings for users. This might be achieved by changes in surfacing, the use of partial screening elements or by changes in level.

(PI) G7.10 Design edges of squares to provide a variety of seating and viewing opportunities.

Simplicity and clarity of form

(PI) G7.11 Optimise views into and out of squares and ensure strong connection with other public spaces.

(PI) G7.12 Elevated spaces should be subject to the same criteria for public space design as open spaces at grade, but should also achieve good connection with the city and the at-grade public space structure.

(PI) G7.13 Encourage people to spend time in squares by providing attractive focal elements and street furniture.

(PI) G7.14 Integrate planting to give visual variety and complexity, and place formal and informal seating to allow users to enjoy the proximity of this planting.

Parks

(PI) G7.15 Locate parks to create a focus for the area, and maximise their potential for informal meeting and recreation

(PI) G7.16 Create parks as positively shaped and defined urban spaces co-located with important activities which attract large numbers of people.

(PI) G7.17 Develop parks for a variety of active and passive uses - for example, sports, play, walking, sitting, sunbathing and resting.

(PI) G7.18 Develop sub-spaces of various types and sizes within parks. These should include small sub-areas at the edges, and a large central open space to cater for occasional events and informal sporting activities.

(PI) G7.19 Incorporate trees, planting and other garden-type landscape elements to create a visually rich, attractive and relaxing soft green ambience that contrasts visually and experientially with the adjacent urban environment.

Variety of spaces

(PI) G7.20 Use trees and other large landscape elements to define the park edge and provide a sense of enclosure, while still allowing views in and out. Trees should relate in scale to the surrounding buildings.
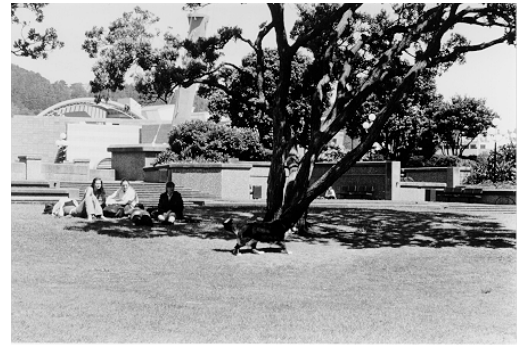
Garden variety landscape elements