

Wellington City Council District Plan

Centres Design Guide

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Introduction

Intention

To achieve high quality buildings, places and spaces in Centres.

This will be by considering they:
are coherently designed

- make a considered response to context
- address heritage values
- establish positive visual effects
- provide good quality living and working environments
- integrate environmental sustainability principles, and
- provide conditions of safety and accessibility.

Using this Guide

Application

The guide applies to new buildings, and additions and modifications to existing buildings in Centres, including heritage buildings. Specific and detailed design objectives are set out in each section, followed by related generic guidelines.

Relevance

Good design is site and programme specific, and not all of the generic design guidelines in this design guide will necessarily apply to every site. However, every guideline that is relevant to the project site, type and scope must be considered, and every relevant design objective satisfied.

Relevant guidelines can be identified by the designer and confirmed with WCC design reviewers in pre-application meetings.

Design flexibility and responsiveness to site

Sometimes a design objective may be best achieved by means not anticipated in these guidelines. In this situation, it is justifiable to depart from a guideline if it can be demonstrated that the alternative design solution better satisfies the associated design objective.

Prioritisation

Every design proposal is a response to a unique mix of requirements and circumstances. Sometimes, they are in competition. While each development should demonstrably satisfy all applicable objectives, the unique conditions of each location may mean some objectives are more important than others. Priority should be given to satisfying those guidelines that are most critical to the overall intentions of this guide. Priorities can be identified by the designer and confirmed with WCC design reviewers in pre-application meetings.

Explanation

Throughout this guide, italicised explanatory text provides further assistance on the proper interpretation and application of the guidelines.

The illustrations in the Guide are intended to support the text by explaining principles. They are not intended to represent actual design solutions.

Information requirements

Refer to Chapter 3 of the District Plan for a list of information required with each application. This includes a design statement that will describe how the proposal satisfies relevant design guidelines and objectives.

Wellington's Centres

The Wellington Centres hierarchy is described below. Each type of Centre is characterised by particular general attributes and activities, although many will show some divergence from the listed attributes.

Sub-Regional Centres

Johnsonville
Kilbirnie

Service a significant part of the City and/or region and provides a significant retail offer. These centres are based around a traditional main street and contain one or more large supermarket and department store. A wide range of retail goods with some specialist stores is available. A range of civic and government services, employment, office, community, recreational, entertainment, residential activities can be found which are supported by a sub-regional transport hub. These centres have high levels of pedestrian activity, together with significant on-street and off-street parking facilities. These two Centres are recognised as Regionally Significant Centres in the proposed Regional Policy Statement.

Town Centres

Karori
Miramar
Mt Cook (Adelaide Road)
Newtown
Tawa

Service one or more suburbs and generally have very good access by public transport and the roading network. They are anchored by a main traditional main street with high levels of pedestrian activity and contain at least one supermarket and a range of other convenience-based retail goods. Town Centres contain some civic and government services and have medium scale employment office, community, recreational and entertainment activities. Residential uses, generally above ground floor, can be found in Town Centres. Both off-street and on-street parking is generally available.

District Centres

Brooklyn
Churton Park
Crofton Downs
Island Bay
Khandallah
Newlands

Contain a moderate retail offer and generally service the day-to-day convenience needs of their surrounding suburb. Accessed by good public transport, some District Centres contain a small supermarket and other convenience-based retail and also have access to some community, recreational and entertainment activities. Where offices are present, they are small scale in character. Residential uses tend to be located above ground floor. Mostly on-street parking is available, with only limited off-street parking.

Neighbourhood Centres

Aro Valley
Berhampore
Berhampore Rintoul Street
Broadway, Strathmore
Constable Street, Newtown
Crofton Road, Ngaio
Darlington Road, Miramar
Hataitai
Kelburn
Kingston
Lincolnshire Farm Neighbourhood Centre

Service the surrounding residential neighbourhood and offer small-scale convenience-based retail for day-to-day needs. Neighbourhood Centres tend to have easy pedestrian access for locals and have some community services and small scale offices. There is good accessibility to public transport and parking is generally on-street only.

Linden
Marsden Village
Mersey Street, Island Bay
Newlands Road
Ngaio
Northland
Onepu Road, Lyall Bay
Roseneath
Seatoun
Shorland Park shops, Island Bay
Standen Street shops, Karori
Strathmore
Tawa, Oxford Street
Thorndon
Tringham Street, Karori
Wadestown

1 Design Coherence

A new building or public space should have its own inherent design integrity and coherence. It should not simply be a piecemeal assemblage of elements and conditions required by the guidelines or other design criteria. This same principle applies to the design of additions and the way in which they relate to existing buildings. For heritage buildings, the integrity and coherence of the original building must be respected.



Building characterised by design coherence

Objective

- 01.1** To ensure each design solution is coherently designed, demonstrating design integrity and providing an optimal integration of all relevant design criteria

Guideline

Internal consistency and integration

- GI.1** Demonstrate in the design of any building an overall coherence that integrates the various design guide requirements.

Design coherence is characterised by internal consistency and cohesion in accordance with a definable integrating design concept. Integration requires that the planning, formal composition, and visual qualities of a building are considered as a whole as well as in part.

2 Relationship to Context

Relating to context is to understand and respond in a considered way to conditions beyond the site. New developments should not occur in isolation.

All development should consider multiple contexts. These include the local street environment and the wider neighbourhood. When a development is large relative to its neighbours, prominently located or accommodates an activity of public significance, the contexts of the wider neighbourhood and potentially the city itself need to be considered. Public significance is determined by the social or cultural importance of the activity and extent of its relevance to the wider community.

A successful relationship to context is based on first identifying and understanding its defining characteristics and patterns, and then responding to these in a considered way. Relevant characteristics will be location specific, however generally include typical building dimensions, orientations and alignments, complexity of form, and proportions. The nature of



Examples of relationship to context with contemporary building

movement past and activity in public space at the edge of the site is also important. Reference to the social or cultural history of the site, or the underlying landscape will assist in developing an authentic sense of place.

Objectives

- O2.1** To recognize the unique qualities of every urban setting and respond to and enhance these with new development.
- O2.2** To maintain or enhance the quality of the settings of individual heritage buildings including those in heritage areas.

Guidelines

Consistency or contrast

- G2.1** Maintain consistency with defining and valued neighbourhood patterns. Contrasts should be created only if the development is significant on a neighbourhood or city-wide scale and/or accommodates a unique or publicly significant function.

Defining and valued patterns will be determined by an analysis of the setting for the development and reference to documents such as Council character studies and Community Plans.

When is consistency required?

Consistency is most important when a new building is placed within a valued and recognised ensemble of buildings that have similar character, or where alignment, similarity and coherence is required to maintain the quality and character of the public environment. The collective quality of such a group of buildings or a public space could be significantly degraded if new development did not visually relate to it in important ways. New development should complement such settings. This means that a development should acknowledge and establish a respectful relationship with its immediate context. It does not imply replication, nor that should the style of new buildings match existing buildings.



New development should complement and support important public, and heritage buildings.

New development should attempt to complete, improve and enhance the setting of heritage areas and individual buildings or groups of buildings listed as heritage items in the District Plan.

When contrast might be considered

Contrast creates a focus for attention. The extent to which this is appropriate depends on the public significance of the proposed development and its function. It also depends on the heritage or cultural value of the setting. Activities that have a neighbourhood-wide significance or unique function justify an expressive or contrasting treatment to differentiate them from the majority of buildings. Such activities may include local community facilities and infrastructure, potentially including some retail facilities.



A new publicly significant building demands contrast

Contrast may also create a local landmark. Landmark structures contribute diversity and richness, and enhance the identity of the city. As distinctive features, landmarks can also help orientation and wayfinding. Because of their visual prominence, they should be of high design quality. While they may alter local context, new landmark structures should not undermine a valued consistent local character. Landmark structures are appropriate for specific and culturally important

sites, but they might also be appropriate in other settings – such as terminating vistas, and at corners and curves in the street.

Where a street or neighbourhood is valued for its complexity and diversity, design solutions that contribute to that diversity and largely remain within its limits will maintain those qualities.

Positive precedents

G2.2 Refer to positive rather than negative precedents.

Where existing patterns are negative or buildings have features that demonstrably compromise the quality of their setting (as determined by reference to this guide), these ‘non-contributing’ buildings or features should not be used as precedents or references for new development.

Achieving consistency

G2.3 Consider ways of complementing the existing built context including:

- compositional relationship or similarity in:
 - siting and alignment of walls in plan
 - frontage orientation
 - alignment of key elevational lines – including roof, cornice, parapet, verandah and/or floor lines
 - proportions of forms and openings
 - visual rhythm of frontage widths or openings
 - levels of complexity of form and material, including the amount of shadow-casting three dimensional detail
 - colour
 - material and constructional quality
- dimensional relationship or similarity
 - of overall building height
 - between secondary forms on a larger building and primary forms on the smaller
 - of frontage module
 - of overall building width

This list is not exhaustive, and other methods may also achieve the objective.

Visual links to the surrounding context are most important where an area possesses a distinctive local character and heritage value.

Generally, both compositional and dimensional relationships are required. The primary ways of achieving visual links are through similarity of plan and frontage alignment, and overall bulk and form.

There is no formula for establishing meaningful visual links. Simplistic or tokenistic responses are rarely successful, and simply selecting one or more of the methods described above will not guarantee the objective is achieved. Generally, however, the primary relationships described (similarity of plan and frontage alignment; overall bulk and form) are required, and these may be supported by others. There is no expectation that making more references will necessarily achieve a better result. An appropriate degree of consistency will be achieved when the mix of methods appropriate to each unique setting is selected and integrated into a coherent design response.

Developing an authentic sense of place

G2.4 Express the local sense of place with new development.



Complementing an existing building

Where there is little or no established pattern, new development should introduce sound design precedents for the future. This might be by expressing the intended use of the building, referring to the history of the site's development and use, or to underlying landscape patterns or elements. Where such references are appropriate and can be made, they should be an integral part of the development's design concept.

3 Siting, Height, Bulk and Form

The siting of building should allow for intended activities while also acknowledging neighbouring building, reinforcing valued patterns of public space, and creating positive open spaces.

Vehicle orientated retail and servicing plays a significant role in some centres, and it is necessary to find ways of successfully integrating these uses at the same time as maintaining a high quality public environment.

Height and bulk are both relative concepts. Buildings of great height or bulk can easily overwhelm their immediate surroundings. Where the length, width and/or height of a new development conflicts with the physical scale and texture of its surroundings, various design techniques may be employed to modify and mitigate the visual impacts.

Height

More attention should be given to formal composition and appearance when a building extends above the threshold established by the predominant height in an area. Building height becomes a particular issue when a building is elevated significantly above its neighbours, potentially creating problems such as visual domination, shading of public open spaces, and wind effects. When the building extends above the height limit, shading of neighbours may also become relevant. As new building extends above its neighbours, an increasingly sophisticated design response is required to achieve a satisfactory result. Conversely, a building that is much lower than its neighbours can break the coherence of the street edge.

Bulk

Bulk is a function of both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of a building and refers to the size of a building relative to its surroundings. A building may be of modest height, but still appear bulky.

Natural light, outlook and ventilation

A building's internal amenity and potential to be environmentally sustainable is significantly affected by the decisions designers make at the outset about planning, bulk and form. Amenity is also affected by existing neighbouring buildings and any neighbouring sites that may be developed. Therefore it is important to create conditions that maintain acceptable levels of daylight, outlook and natural ventilation should the development be 'built-out'. This relates particularly to setbacks from site boundaries. Consideration should be given to optimum widths and depths to take advantage of natural ventilation and daylight.

Objectives

- 03.1** To complement existing patterns of alignment, and achieve a positive scale relationship with adjoining buildings and public spaces.



Examples of buildings defining public space, and articulation of form and façade to give visual interest

- 03.2** To respect the setting of heritage items and identified heritage areas.
- 03.3** To create coherent patterns of building that contribute to the amenity of neighbouring public spaces.
- 03.4** To ensure that reasonable levels of ventilation, daylight to and outlook from habitable spaces in the building will be maintained should development on adjacent sites be maximised.
- 03.5** To enhance the informal pedestrian network within Centres.
- 03.6** To respect the setting, context and heritage significance of Government House and Grounds.

Guidelines

Street edge definition and building alignment

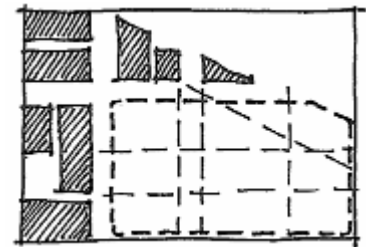
- G3.1** Site and align building forms to reinforce the local street grid and the local system of public open spaces, with common alignment and construction generally to the street edge.

Fronts of buildings should generally be built to the edge of streets and other spaces, and large or random edge setbacks should be avoided. Special-purpose buildings that have public, community and/or cultural relevance are exceptions - it may be appropriate that such buildings are expressed as local landmarks. Some parts of centres may be characterized by valued patterns of stand-alone buildings that are setback from the street edge and the complex shapes or prominent positions of particular sites may be recognised and expressed through a limited setback from the street edge. Vehicle orientated uses may justify setbacks, depending on location and always with careful design. However, any setbacks must maintain the general pattern and coherence of street edge definition, and create a positive open space that demonstrably contributes to the wider system of public space.

Alignment of building forms in parallel with the local street grid should generally be continued at upper levels. However, contrast may be appropriate on unique or prominent sites and with special purpose buildings for publicly significant activities.

- G3.2** Align buildings with the block pattern typical of the surroundings where there are no other buildings on the block.

The siting of new buildings on large open sites should establish a positive precedent for new development. New buildings are more intrusive when they are sited in isolation, and when they contradict the characteristic block and street layout of the surrounding area.



References for primary alignments on a vacant block

- G3.3** Maintain the general continuity of massing and street frontage alignment at bends and street corners.

Buildings should, where practicable be built to the street corner in order to emphasise street edge definition. This may include employing shape and surface treatment to emphasise the curved or angular shape of the street bend or intersection. It may be possible in some locations to integrate a setback if this is essential to the function of a facility, and if the corner is

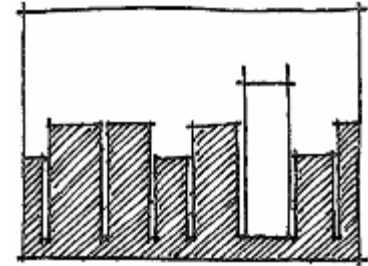
celebrated by other means, and the space created is positive and in keeping with the wider street environment.

G3.4 Maintain general consistency of building height at the street edge.

Better streets and public spaces are formed when the height of buildings at their edges is a generally consistent. However some variation is possible, in the order of one-third of the height of the highest buildings in a street characterised by relatively consistent building height. Smaller variations in height are appropriate in heritage areas, where it is generally not appropriate to increase the street edge height by more than one storey above that of adjoining heritage buildings.

Landmark structures or buildings for activities that have neighbourhood or city-wide significance can, and often should, break the pattern. However it should not be general practice to conspicuously elevate other buildings to become landmarks. This is particularly inappropriate in heritage areas and may be considered in such areas only in special circumstances where contrast rather than consistency is appropriate.

Consistency of height is not important where a street edge is underdeveloped with a concentration of very low buildings or open sites.



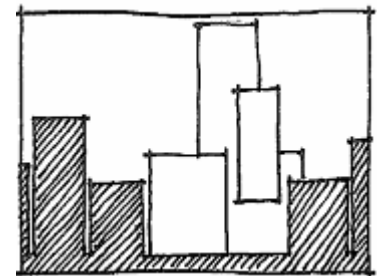
Variation in the order of one-third the height of the highest buildings

Height and scale relationship

G3.5 Ensure new buildings do not dominate adjacent public spaces and any significantly lower neighbouring buildings by moderating their height at and close to the street edge. This will achieve a scale transition between the higher and lower buildings.

This can be done by techniques including:

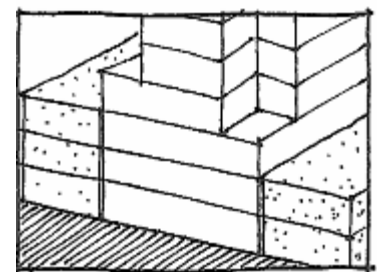
- *boundary setbacks at high level;*
- *secondary forms of similar dimension to those of the lower buildings, placed to act as transitional volumes;*
- *physical separation of large tall buildings from those that are much lower;*
- *reduced height adjacent to much lower buildings or spaces where shading is problematic, and;*
- *significantly reducing the plan area for the tallest components of the building, while potentially retaining full site coverage at lower levels.*



Achieving height and scale relationship using a variety of techniques

Where a new development adjoins a heritage building that is two storeys or less, its height should be not more than one storey above the heritage building, over an area extending approximately 5-8 metres along and back from the street frontage at the common boundary with the heritage building. Where a heritage building is higher than this reference, the extent of increased height relative to the heritage building increases proportionally.

A similar setback from the front of an adjoining heritage building and height transition at the common boundary is appropriate where adjoining heritage buildings are located mid-block or set back from the street edge. Means of avoiding visual dominance should also be considered when the neighbouring heritage building is close to but not immediately adjoining the common boundary.



Indicative setbacks adjacent to heritage buildings. Note that guidelines relating to design coherence also apply.

G3.6 Provide a generous ground to first floor height to buildings fronting main streets.

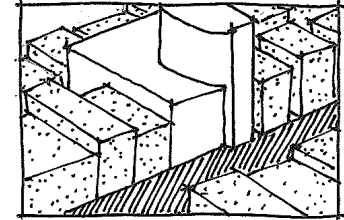
This should be around one third higher than the floor-to-floor

height for typical upper storeys, should extend over the entire site, and should comfortably accommodate retail. It should provide the space and configuration that allows future installation of extract ventilation and a grease trap. This recognises that a greater ground to first inter-storey height is both typical and traditional along main streets in Centres, and also helps accommodate a range of different future uses at ground floor level including food and beverage related retail.

- G3.7** Reduce the proportion of site area covered by parts of buildings that are significantly higher than existing surrounding buildings.

The area of site coverage above that threshold would be in the order of one half to two thirds. This applies where a building is in the order of a third higher than buildings on adjoining sites and immediately across the street, and affects those parts of the building extending above that height.

Because they are visually prominent, the highest parts of such buildings require particular attention to formal composition. Setbacks should be used to achieve a scale relationship with existing lower buildings. However, all setbacks should be consistent with a coherent formal concept for the building.



Reduction in site coverage to addressing visual dominance of conspicuously high building mass

Building bulk

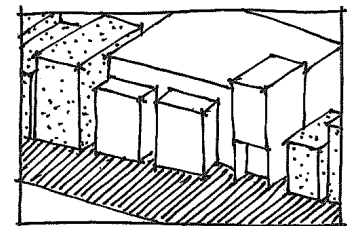
- G3.8** Mitigate the visual impact of the building bulk, where a building is large relative to its neighbours and to other nearby buildings.

This applies to buildings that are more than around 50% taller than their immediate neighbours. It also applies to large floor plate buildings, particularly those with an unusually elongated plan form or very large wall planes. Large floor plate buildings are those that are in the order of twice or three times the width and depth of other buildings around.

Utilise techniques such as introducing:

- *a secondary foreground volume or volumes to help obscure the primary volume when viewed from neighbouring spaces;*
- *transitional volumes between the smaller existing buildings and the larger, primary volume of the new development;*
- *contrast between projecting and recessive elements; and/or;*
- *sculptural form.*

In situations characterised by a mix of buildings, and where a building accommodates an important public function, contrast – in the form of large and simple bulk – may be justified. However, a sense of human scale is always required at the street, or at other public edges of the building that are used by pedestrians.



Mitigating bulk with transitional volumes

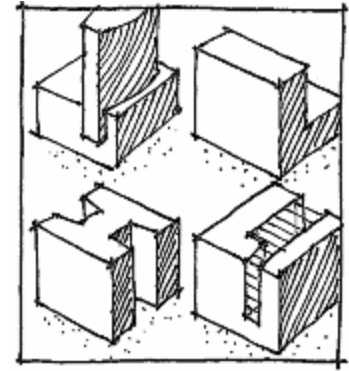
Natural light, outlook and ventilation

- G3.9** Provide on-site setbacks from side and rear boundaries (or atria and lightwells) and position windows as required to maintain acceptable natural light, outlook and ventilation for habitable spaces, while also considering privacy effects.

Internal amenity should not be dependant on windows that are placed on or very close to internal site boundaries. It should be assumed that openings at internal boundaries will be built out in the future, and so acceptable light and outlook should be provided by other means. In assessing this provision, Council will assume that development at the boundaries of neighbouring sites is, or will be, built to the maximum height anticipated by the District Plan.

Changes of occupation may occur over the life of a building, so this requirement applies to all building types. Coordinating setbacks on adjoining sites ensures light and outlook are shared and maximised

Residential amenity and outdoor living require more consideration of these issues than other activities. The New Zealand Building Code requirements for light and outlook should be considered in the design of residential buildings when establishing plan and building form. Environmental efficiencies may be achieved by providing daylight and ventilation beyond the minimum building code standards.



Examples of approaches to achieve light, outlook and ventilation

Positive open space

- G3.10** Locate any publicly accessible open spaces on site and any setbacks from the street edge so that they complement other spaces within the street system, and positively shape and define any new spaces with edges of buildings or large scale landscape elements.

Publicly accessible open spaces on a site should have active edges, be located on main walking routes or ready access and visibility from them. They should wherever possible be sunny, and provide shelter that will attract and support occupation.

Some street edge setbacks may be necessitated at the street edge for drive-through or vehicle orientated retail. Where these are both essential and appropriately located, care should be taken with associated building design and landscaping to ensure they are seen and experienced as positive open spaces.

New open spaces should be orientated to receive sun during the time of day when most use can be expected, and may complement rather than reproduce existing spaces in this regard. Open spaces to the south of tall buildings are rarely occupied. Left-over or residual space without positive qualities is often unsuccessful. Where spaces have poor orientation and edge conditions, and lack natural surveillance, they are frequently poorly used or claimed for delinquent activities, and may provide opportunities for concealment and entrapment.

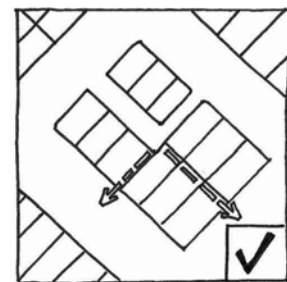
The size of new spaces should be appropriate to the intended use. Landscaping that is provided to enhance buildings that are set back from the street edge should enhance the appearance of the site from the road and define the street boundary. All landscaping should complement the adjacent streetscape and be attractive, robust and readily maintained.

Mid-block pedestrian access

- G3.11** Consider creating a new public thoroughfare through large blocks where this would enhance walkability.

Where existing blocks are large and impermeable, public thoroughfares or pathways that usefully link public destinations or existing paths and streets should be integrated into site redevelopment.

In planning mid-block pedestrian access, there should be a clear distinction between spaces and routes that are open to the public, and onsite communal open spaces that are private or semi-private, particularly in residential developments. The former should be open to all, and the latter access-controlled to maintain safety and security. Any through-site links should be designed to have a reasonable proportion of active edge.



Mid-block access to connect destinations and extend existing streets

G3.12 Mitigate the visual impact of building bulk in the Mt Cook (Adelaide Road) Height Zones and ensure that new buildings do not dominate Government House and Grounds.

This applies to all buildings east of Adelaide Road in the Mt Cook (Adelaide Road) Height Zone.

4 Edge Treatment

The buildings that line the edges of streets and other public spaces establish their character, quality and attractiveness. They collectively define the setting for the activities that take place there.

Buildings should provide active edges, with frontages to adjoining streets and other public open spaces. These edges provide a sense of occupancy and natural surveillance, and contribute interest and safety for passersby. Safety is an essential attribute of successful urban spaces, and can be supported by adopting the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Factors that are particularly important in achieving a high quality public environment include the frequency, location and design of entrances and windows. The type and arrangement of activities, especially at ground level, are also important. Blank, visually monotonous building backs are not acceptable at the edge of any street or other public space.

Blank walls at high level in visible locations are also detrimental. It is anticipated that building height within Centres will increase over time as buildings extend up to the District Plan height limit. Therefore, in any area where existing buildings are relatively low, new buildings may be significantly taller and more visible than surrounding properties. Accordingly, it is important to give attention to the architectural treatment of all building facades.



Example of an active edge including building entrance

Objective

- 04.1** To create building edge conditions that support pedestrian activity and enhance visual interest, legibility, safety and comfort in streets and other public spaces.

Guidelines

Building fronts

- G4.1** Orientate building frontages, including windows and the main public entrance, to the street, ensuring also that all secondary facades that face a street are given an appropriate treatment.

The connection between building interiors and adjoining public spaces is fundamental in determining the character and quality of those public spaces. A building with openings or large amounts of glazing that display internal activity and doors at ground level, as well as windows above, offers visual interest, and opportunity for informal surveillance. This will create a more successful edge to public open space than a façade without openings.

Buildings that are set back from the street edge should also provide active edges fronting towards the street. However a main building entrance facing a park or square should connect with, but not appropriate, that space as a forecourt.

Where a site is bounded by more than one street or public space it should establish a primary frontage on one public boundary, generally to the most significant street or space. Secondary frontages should be established on others.



Building frontage to the street

- G4.2** Use lighting within shopfronts to create an attractive effect after dark, and also to contribute spill lighting to the footpath.

At night, spill light from shopfront windows enhances the attractiveness and safety of the street edge. Any security facility should ideally be an unobtrusive and inherent part of the shopfront.

Active edges

- G4.3** Place visible publicly-relevant activity in view at the public edges of buildings.

Publicly relevant activity includes retail, event space, show rooms and any other activity to which the public may gain access. A view of what is happening inside a building creates visual interest. It also communicates how the building is used and occupied, which helps people understand where they are in the neighbourhood. Buildings and public open spaces that have activity at their edges, including good visual connections with the street, also encourage informal surveillance that contributes to perceived and actual safety. Ground floor activity that supports the use of public open space is particularly important when a building fronts a park, square or retail orientated street. Car parking, which is often inactive and unattractive, is an undesirable activity at the edges of main streets in Centres.



Example of an active edge

- G4.4** Provide frontages that complement the adjoining street (or other publicly accessible open space).

The proportion of ground level windows and openings should be maximised along primary streets in areas of established retail activity and where intensive pedestrian use is likely. Secondary streets are preferred for vehicle-orientated and drive-through retail including service stations. Secondary streets and lanes are preferred locations for service access. The hierarchy of street types and relevant design

considerations are:

Primary and secondary streets:

- *Building should be at the street edge unless any setback is an integral part of a coherent public space plan for the street.*
- *Blank walls at the street edge should be avoided.*
- *Display windows or doors should comprise the majority of the frontage.*
- *Entries and exits to carparks should be located not to compromise pedestrian amenity.*
- *Canopies and verandahs are required at the street edge, and these will generally provide continuous shelter over footpaths.*
- *Fine grain of frontage is important, with frontages desirably not wider than in the order of 8-10 metres on primary streets, and 20 metres on secondary streets.*

Transitional streets:

- *May include a diverse range of buildings including wider frontages.*
- *Blank walls at the street edge should be avoided.*
- *Display windows or doors should comprise a reasonable proportion of the frontage except if this is residential, in which case windows to living areas should overlook the street.*
- *Shelter elements are required at building entrances, and these may or may not be continuous along the street edge.*

Frontage treatments should complement that of neighbours. However, where a street or public open space is currently dominated by inactive edges, it is important for new development to redress rather than perpetuate this situation.

Windows should be connected to internal activity. Blank or 'false' windows are not acceptable. The addition of roller doors or security screens to shopfronts is also not acceptable. Instead, security should be unobtrusively integrated into the building fabric.

In locations where residential activity is appropriate at ground level, techniques such as raising the ground floor slightly above pavement level and/or creating a shallow setback from the street edge might be employed to provide internal privacy while still ensuring that the building and activity within it positively addresses the street.

G4.5 Articulate or eliminate wall surfaces that are featureless or plain.

Large blank surfaces should not occur at ground level at the street edge, nor at high level if in prominent public view. While a building may have a primary frontage, all other visible facades should include detail and openings and be treated similarly as frontages - albeit secondary ones.

However, a large flat wall surface may be used to balance other more complex parts of a façade. It may provide contrast and visual relief or a scale relation to an adjacent larger building. A flat wall surface might constitute a small proportion of ground floor facades, but only if the quality of the street edge is not compromised as a result.

Some buildings may extend considerably above their neighbours, and parts of their service orientated side and rear

Street types

Primary streets

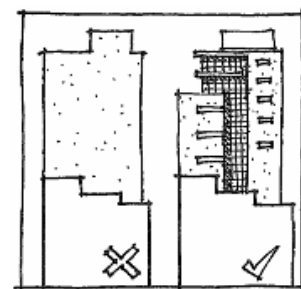
are at the core of the neighbourhood and include the central part of any 'main street'.

Secondary streets

are connected to primary streets and spaces, and likely to change use over time

Transitional streets

are all other streets within the centre. These are generally peripheral, transitional in use and potentially include intensive residential.



Wall articulation, including balance of modelled and flat surfaces

facades are likely to remain in prominent public view. It is important that such upper level facades are given visual interest with an architectural treatment. Consideration should be given to articulating these high level walls, often located close to boundaries, with openings, and architectural treatments including three-dimensional modelling.

Servicing and car parking

- G4.6** Integrate servicing and car parking functions in a way that does not compromise the quality of the street edge, nor the status of the main entry to the building.

~~Where possible place loading areas away from the main frontages and main entrance. Ensure service and rubbish storage areas are visually unobtrusive and/or back from the street edge.~~

Vehicle access to sites should be located so as to ensure safe pedestrian access along the street and maintain continuity of main retail frontages along the street edge. This should not compromise the quality of the street edge, nor the status of the main entry of the building.

Parking should be at the rear of buildings, or above/below ground so that they do not dominate the streetscape or the appearance of the building. Multiple garage doors facing the street should be avoided. This allows publicly relevant activity to be located at ground floor street edges.

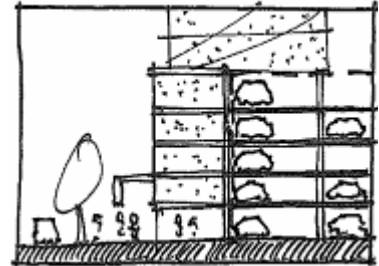
~~Where possible place loading areas away from the main frontages and main entrance. Ensure service and rubbish storage areas are visually unobtrusive and/or back from the street edge.~~

- G4.7** Provide space at the main entrance for loading and unloading when an on-site loading area is not available or practicable.

Space should be provided within or close to lobby areas so that goods can be moved through without compromising the lobby function. This should meet the reasonably expected demand for servicing and might be an unobtrusive part of a generous entrance lobby.

- G4.8** Provide for a safe and convenient pedestrian access from footpaths to the entry of buildings.

Landscaping that signals the intended use of spaces and routes, generous widths and gradients and ensuring adequate lines of vision and appropriate surface marking and signs all help to create a safe and convenient entry experience. Where buildings are set back from the street edge, pedestrian only or pedestrian priority areas will typically be provided with kerbs or raised pedestrian facilities or material differentiation. Otherwise, where vehicle use is low, shared surfaces may be acceptable.



Parking located behind a veneer of activity, maintaining an active edge to the street.

Shelter and building entrance enhancement

G4.89 Develop transitional spaces and/or features between the public street and building interiors. These should signal the location of entrances, enhance the sense of arrival and provide shelter.

Verandas, colonnades and entrance canopies offer the dual benefits of providing shelter and signalling the building's entrance. Where a street edge is likely to increasingly feature retailing, or is an important pedestrian path, consider extending this shelter along the entire building frontage.

While entrance definition and features are desirable, large setbacks should not be introduced – unless the open area created is attractive and useable public space, and maintains the quality and integrity of the street edge.

Universal access that allows all users, including those who are disabled, to use the same entrance is desirable, however this should not compromise heritage values.

Adding shelter elements or verandahs to heritage buildings should generally be avoided. However these may be considered in locations where a verandah has existed previously, where active edges and shelter are essential, and where they would not adversely affect the heritage values of the building or area.



Building entrance enhancement

5 Façade Composition and Building Tops

The composition of buildings determines their relation to context, their design coherence, and their suitability for a range of uses. Consideration should be given to the composition of every façade, including the building's top and its relationship to the building below.

The topography of Wellington ensures that many Centres are overlooked from surrounding areas, and even moderately tall buildings will be viewed from many directions. If building tops are designed in a positive rather than a utilitarian manner, they can enrich the character of the neighbourhood.



Coherence in façade composition

Objectives

- O5.1** To ensure that façade and building top design is coherently resolved.
- O5.2** To ensure that additions and alterations to heritage buildings maintain the heritage values of those buildings, their setting and any associated heritage area.
- O5.3** To facilitate multiple and changing buildings uses, except where such change adversely affects the heritage values of heritage buildings.

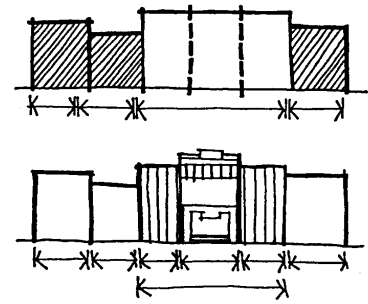
Guidelines

Relation to neighbouring buildings

- G5.1** Where there is a characteristic pattern of vertical and/or horizontal subdivision on neighbouring buildings along the street, relate the facades of new buildings to that pattern.

Visual subdivision of building facades can be used to relate the scale of a large building to much smaller neighbours, and also

avoid visual monotony and achieve a sense of human scale. This also ensures the building relates to its context. Visual subdivision techniques include alignment of floors, using similar frontage widths, and applying to the frontage secondary forms that are of similar dimension to all or parts of neighbouring buildings. Depending on context, a combination of these methods may be appropriate.



Frontage subdivision

- G5.2** Generally avoid reproducing the appearance of existing frontages on new buildings.

New buildings in heritage areas should respect the proportions, general dimensions and level of design quality of adjoining heritage buildings to retain design consistency in those areas. However, while new buildings are required to recognise their context, it is neither necessary nor desirable to replicate the style and appearance of heritage or other existing buildings. New facades can be innovative and reflect contemporary culture and norms, while still relating in fundamental ways to their context.

Additions and modifications to existing buildings

- G5.3** Establish a coherent compositional relationship with the existing structure, three-dimensional forms and facades when adding to or modifying existing buildings.

Methods include:

- Common alignments, particularly vertical alignments of load-bearing elements and centre-lines of openings;
- Use of common materials, textures and colours;
- Expression of common modules or elements of similar dimension and proportion; and/or
- Expression or reinforcement of a vertical hierarchy of base middle and top, if relevant to the existing building.

All solutions are project specific and the combination of appropriate methods will vary accordingly. It is often possible to integrate contrasting elements or treatments providing key alignments are retained, and the addition can demonstrate a considered positive relationship with the existing building.

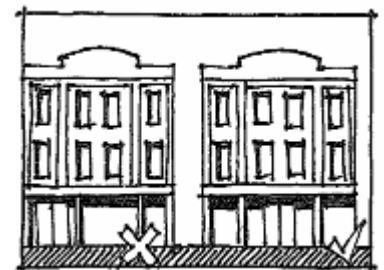


Example of relating to context with vertical alignment and completion of the composition of an existing building with a new top

Shopfronts

- G5.4** Relate shopfronts to the composition of the building, paying particular attention to the alignment of columns and other vertical elements.

Shopfronts may express a shop's identity, but should not undermine the composition of the building. This is particularly important for heritage buildings and buildings that include more than one shop at ground level. New shopfronts on heritage buildings should follow the composition of the original design.



Ensure load-bearing elements are aligned

- G5.5** Ensure new shopfronts that adjoin heritage buildings or heritage areas are compatible with existing significant heritage shopfronts.

Significant heritage shopfronts are those that retain heritage form, proportions and fabric.

- G5.6** Retain and conserve significant heritage shopfronts on heritage buildings.

Where possible, missing fabric should be restored. Materials and details should be compatible with the era of the building.

Building tops and roofscape

- G5.7** Integrate the top of a building, including plant and services, as an explicit and coherent part of its overall composition.

The top of a building is more than the roof. However, how much of a building comprises its ‘top’ varies, depending on its height and the chosen design concept. On a four storey building the ‘top’ may include the uppermost storey. How the building top is realised, or whether this consideration extends further down the building, is a matter of architectural judgement that depends on the design concept and proportions, as well as the building’s overall height.



An integrated building top

- G5.8** Place particular emphasis on the design and appearance of the tops of tall buildings which are prominent in views across the neighbourhood.

The image and form of the neighbourhood is strongly influenced by buildings that are tall - either in absolute terms or relative to their neighbours - therefore are prominent on the skyline. The design of the tops of such buildings demands particular consideration. The articulation of form and surface of conspicuously tall buildings should generally present large, simple features that can be recognized from afar. Silhouette and profile should also be considered.

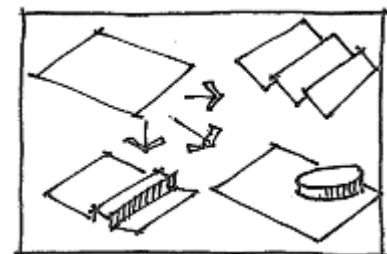
- G5.9** Avoid degrading the value of heritage area skylines by changing the parapets and roofs of heritage buildings or adding to buildings within or immediately adjacent to heritage areas.

Parapet lines contribute to the identity of the building and are often a distinguishing characteristic of the street edge. The roof is a ‘fifth elevation’ of a heritage building, and its heritage values should be recognised and protected.

The relevant skyline is that which is viewed from the adjacent street and other public vantage points.

- G5.10** Modulate the scale of, and create visual interest in, the roofs of large floor plate low-rise buildings that are viewed from elevated sites or are otherwise prominent.

Regardless of their height, the roofs of large floor-plate buildings can have significant visual impacts - especially when seen from elevated sites around the city. In this respect, low-rise buildings with large plan dimensions can produce more significant visual effects than tall buildings with small footprints. Modulation techniques may include visual subdivision of large roof planes; sculptural roof forms; and expression of structure or secondary form, such as service rooms and towers. The roof edges of such buildings are important when viewed from below, and consideration should be given to the composition of this edge, including its shape and visual rhythm.



Indicative modulation of roofscape

Human scale

- G5.11** Give a sense of human scale at the publicly occupied edges of buildings.

This might be achieved by various means including openings with proportions and/or dimensions that are similar to those of the human figure; textures and subdivision of elements that are of commonly understood dimensions; and elements and components that are sized for human occupation and use.

Flexibility and adaptability

- G5.12** Develop façade imagery that is not exclusively associated with a single type of use, or which could be readily adapted for a number of different activities.

Building use is likely to change over time, except for buildings such as service stations which are necessarily purpose-built. Buildings that are most likely to contribute vitality to the public environment are those that can be readily adapted, ensuring continuity of occupation. This is facilitated by easy subdivision of internal space, multiple entrances at the street edge, and proportions that readily allow subdivision or amalgamation to accommodate different uses. The ability for existing building stock to readily accept change of use is an aspect of environmental sustainability.

Proposed changes of use of heritage buildings should be carefully considered to avoid adverse effects to their heritage values.

6 Materials and Detail

Materials and detail are important in maintaining visual interest and a positive relation to context and heritage value.

The quality of materials and detail is particularly important at ground level. Here, people are able to view buildings at close range and perhaps touch them, increasing the risk of damage. This fact also determines maintenance requirements and serviceability, factors that are particularly important on more inaccessible parts of buildings.

Heritage values should be identified and protected, allowing spaces and fabric of lesser significance to be adapted for re-use. The heritage values of a building or area can be enhanced by reinstating missing original fabric, sensitively replacing existing fabric, and/or ameliorating the effect of previous changes.



Sophisticated detailing in a contemporary building

Objectives

- O6.1** To achieve qualities of visual interest and physical robustness consistent with demands arising from the building's location.
- O6.2** To respect and conserve original heritage fabric.

Guidelines

Compositional coherence

- G6.1** Ensure the quality of materials and detailing is consistent with the compositional theme of the building.

This applies particularly to additions to existing buildings. It is important that the palette of materials characteristic of the original construction be used in any minor additions and alterations to heritage buildings. Similar levels of material quality can also be used to ensure a new building responds appropriately to a valued or

important neighbour.

G6.2 Reinstate missing architectural details on heritage buildings where possible.

This includes reinstating verandas, balconies, parapets etc. where they have been known to exist previously.

G6.3 Ensure richness of detail is provided in public areas and other parts of buildings that are experienced by the public at close range and for extended periods of time.

These parts of buildings require enhanced visual interest to engage the eye of occupants and passers-by. This can be achieved by greater attention to fine detail – for example with materials selected for textural or colour effect, and increased complexity of form at the detailed level. Conversely, large simple forms and a relative absence of fine detail are appropriate in those parts of developments that are experienced only at long range or at speed. Some parts of buildings may be experienced in several ways: a composition that integrates fine detail with medium and large-scale elements is important in such cases.

The incoherent composition of elements (including signage, services and other items) that causes visual clutter to buildings and streetscapes is to be avoided.



Richness of detail at ground level

G6.4 Use three dimensional detail to give visual richness, depth and relief to facades.

A façade is given depth, richness and visual interest with shadow casting detail. This can be created by expressing structural elements; modelling openings with deep reveals; overlapping modular façade materials; double skin facades, and applying shading devices and other elements such as louvres, light reflectors, screens or balconies.

Areas of three dimensional detail may be contrasted and balanced by flat areas for further architectural effect. This approach requires consideration of the overall composition of the building.



Three-dimensional form

Physical robustness

G6.5 Use physically robust, readily maintained materials and details in areas that can be expected to be subject to damage or vandalism.

High quality finishes and good maintenance help establish an attractive image for a building or place. Materials, finishes and details that are resistant to damage and/or readily repaired or replaced are desirable. Signs of damage or lack of care (as well as overt signs of ‘target-hardening’ such as barred windows and security shutters at shop fronts) will raise perceptions of disorder and a potential safety threat. Some people may be dissuaded from using these places.



Three-dimensional form and detail

Façade transparency

G6.6 Use glazing systems that maintain visual connections between public spaces and building interiors.

Limit, or avoid, the use of highly reflective glazing that precludes day-time visual connection. Such glazing not only prevents the public environment from benefitting from signs of activity, but it can, when used over an entire façade, lead to the

building being visually dominant. Methods for achieving environmental control and privacy that do not preclude visual connections are available. Highly reflective cladding materials should also be avoided where they would create glare conditions in neighbouring streets and public spaces.