

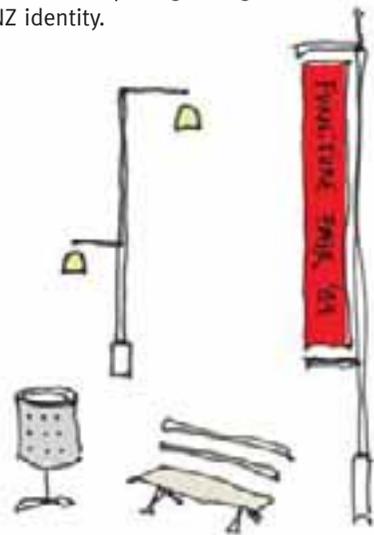
Details in the public spaces

A good city has fine details. When people move around by foot there is time to see, to touch and to enjoy all the various elements in the streetscape.

Unappealing litter bins, poorly designed signs and items placed randomly on footpaths are all signals to people visiting the city about lack of care and concern for city quality. Poor and carelessly placed pieces of street furniture destroy the visual urban quality of cities at eye level.

Recommendations

- a) Introduce a local design profile which can create a strong city image and a sense of ownership of the public spaces.
- b) Choose a city colour for the street furniture and create a design series of benches, lamp posts, bins etc.
- c) Create a policy for the design of streetscapes
- d) Improve the quality of street signs and street furniture around the city.
- e) Encourage better standards in shop signs and lettering.
- f) Create a policy for the use of paving materials and look after these. Use paving of high, durable quality reflecting NZ identity.



City furnishings ; Melbourne

Melbourne has been renovated to create a city of fine streets. The linear character of the spaces is underlined by rows of trees and street lamps, and the regular wide footway paved with Bluestone slabs communicates the message that this is a city street welcoming pedestrians.

The Urban Design Office drew up a palette of street furniture for new public spaces with bluestone pavements. The programme includes a wide assortment of public space furnishings with perforated steel plates as the unifying material. A dark green colour that harmonizes well with the colour of the pavement was chosen for the new benches, tables, screens, planters and rubbish bins.

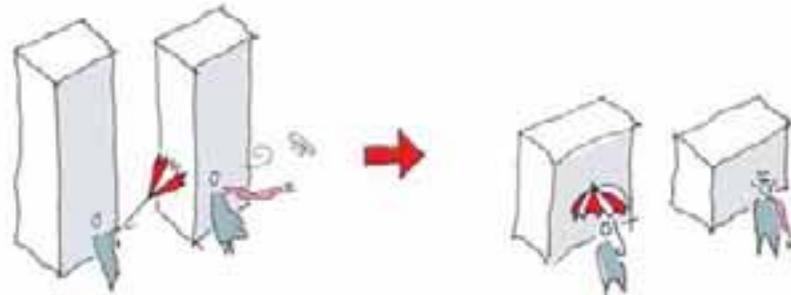
The new city furnishings have been introduced throughout the city wherever new pavements have been laid. At the same time, older public furnishings as well as the jumble of private furnishings have been removed. Private café chairs in plastic are not accepted on the stylish new pavements. Instead, outdoor serving establishments are required to use a limited range of selected cafe furniture or the city's official furnishings - green tables, chairs and planters - that can either be leased or purchased from the municipality.





Improving climate at ground floor

- a) Plan public spaces carefully to make the most of the natural conditions.
- b) Supply protection against wind and draughts.
- c) Avoid footbridges.
- d) Avoid long stretches of blank facades and tall buildings.



Strengthen the history and the architectural heritage

- a) Require that new buildings fit in with their neighbours, by considering scale, building heights and the relationship to the surrounding public spaces.
- b) Replace heavy canopies along building fronts with light elegant canopies.
- c) Remove inappropriate vertical signs on the older buildings and signs which obscure the details of the architecture of the buildings.
- d) Develop regulations for signage, canopies etc. in order to prevent inappropriate elements reducing the quality of the architecture and the street environment.
- e) Encourage awareness and promote sensitive re-use of heritage buildings. Re-use old buildings for new purposes if possible.

Improve ground floor frontages

Ground level frontages can provide colour and vitality, make walking more interesting and pleasant, inviting people to stop, but too often pedestrians are met by dull blank walls. These types of frontages create deserted areas in the city.

A city-wide policy for the treatment of footpath frontages is required. The policy should be applied to all new and renovated buildings and should be linked to the street hierarchy. Guidelines for frontages should reflect the significance of the street for pedestrians and improve the experience of the city at “eye level”.

Possible guidelines for the most important category of street frontage include:

- a) A uniform building line, as buildings built up to the edge of the street or public space create a more clearly defined space.
- b) All shops or offices must have visual contact with the footpath.
At least 60% of the total length of the facade along the footpath should be transparent, with displays and /or visual contact with the work being done on the ground floor.
- c) No parking garages or other passive uses of the ground floor of buildings facing the footpaths.
- d) Shop and office windows lit up until midnight.
- e) Good details and fine materials at eye level.
- f) Relief and fine details in the facades at ground level - making them more interesting to move along and more conducive to stop and stand by.
- g) Ledges and shelves at sitting heights could be included in the designs.



New Oxford Street in London enjoys a good mix of transparent and smaller units.