



WAIKATO URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

TOWN CENTRES

2018



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1. PURPOSE OF THE WAIKATO DISTRICT TOWN CENTRE GUIDELINES

These guidelines provide direction for the community, landowners, developers and Council on how to achieve land use development that responds to and promotes Council and community aspirations for vibrant and attractive centres that build upon and enhance existing character values.

Through the development of the Waikato District Plan, Waikato District Council has identified a variety of potential issues facing the district as it grows, including those relating to town centre development. Based on best practice design principles, the guidelines seek to build on the Council's objectives and policies within the Waikato District Plan, and form a tool to implement those policies. In this regard, the guidelines are intended to assist in the planning process by providing landowners and developers with a clear understanding of the design outcomes sought for town centre development (i.e. within the Business Town Centre Zones) throughout the district.

Waikato District Council's Commitment to Good Urban Design Outcomes

The NZ Urban Design Protocol is a voluntary agreement between signatories, of which the Waikato District Council (5 October 2011) is one. It commits the signatories to specific urban design initiatives intended to raise the quality of urban design within their town or city. While non-statutory, the Urban Design Protocol provides a mandate for the consideration of high quality urban design.

The Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities for signatories to consider as part of the day to day planning and design of their urban environments.

1. Context – seeing that buildings, places and spaces are part of the whole town or city;
2. Character – reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment;
3. Choice – ensuring diversity and choice for people;
4. Connections – enhancing how different networks link together for people;
5. Creativity – encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions;
6. Custodianship – ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy; and
7. Collaboration – communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

These qualities are considered appropriate guiding principles for town centre development within the Waikato District and have informed the preparation of these guidelines. In particular, each of outcomes and the supporting guidelines set out in this document can be linked back to one or more of the above qualities and, in doing so, seeks to enhance the overall quality of the District's urban areas as they continue to grow in the future.



2. HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are set out under key topic headings and structured to provide clear guidance in relation to the outcomes sought and design guidelines for achieving those outcomes. The outcomes sought explain the end result that Council is seeking to achieve, in response to the objectives and the policies of the plan; while the design guidelines outline recommended design approaches to achieve the outcomes sought. Each set of guidelines is supported by precedent images and diagrams to further assist in understanding how the outcome can be achieved.

Supporting Design Statements

As part of a development application, a **design statement** shall be submitted to Council, in accordance with the information requirements outlined in Chapter 19 of the District Plan. This statement shall:

- Outline the design justification of the proposal
- An assessment against the outcomes sought and design guidelines within this document
- Include supporting plans and cross sections, as required to illustrate how the proposal responds to the applicable outcomes sought and design guidelines.

Every application will be different and not all the outcomes sought and design guidelines will be relevant to the assessment of the proposed land use application. Each town centre land use application will be assessed on its merits - taking into account its context and specific attributes. In addition, a degree of flexibility in relation to how the proposals responds to the guidelines is reasonable and to be expected. What is important is that the outcomes sought are clearly achieved and that this able to be demonstrated in the proposal.

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Town Centre Specific Character Statements

In addition to these guidelines, specific town centre character statements have been prepared for a number of town centre areas (i.e. Business Town Centre Zones) and are included within the Waikato District Plan as part of the overall guidance for town centre land use. Where a relevant town centre character guidelines exists, this should be read in conjunction with and treated as an addendum to outcomes sought within these guidelines.

Other Relevant Supporting Information

Waikato District council will develop master plans for towns. Master plans will enable the community to take a holistic and visionary look at each town that has been marked as a growth node. Master plans will take a multi-disciplinary approach where consideration will be given to existing developments, and how they will be transformed to meet long-term growth needs and the needs of each community. These design guidelines will inform the master planning approach; furthermore, each master plan will refine and provide distinct detail on outcomes sought for each town to complement the outcomes sought in these design guidelines.

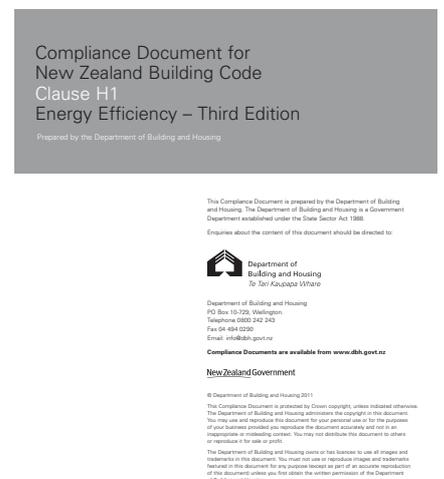
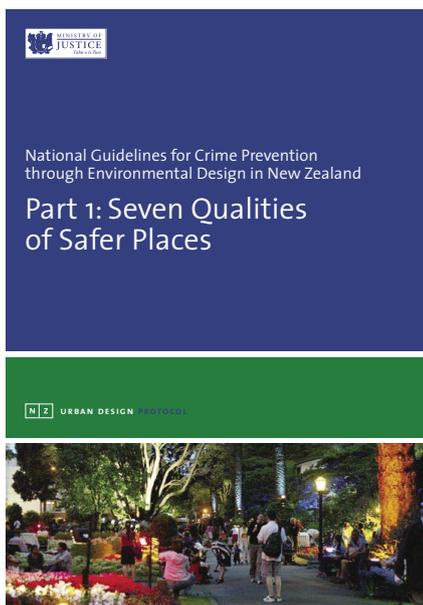
The following references also provide further useful information relating to various aspects of subdivision design:

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in New Zealand, November 2005 (<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/towns-and-cities/national-guidelines-crime-prevention-through-environmental-design-new>).

Universal Access Design: New Zealand Standard: Design for Access and Mobility – Buildings and Associated Facilities (<https://www.standards.govt.nz/assets/Publication-files/NZS4121-2001.pdf>).

Energy Efficiency: Compliance Document for New Zealand Building Code: Energy Efficiency (<https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/building-code-compliance/h1-energy-efficiency/asvm/H1-energy-efficiency-3rd-edition-amendment-2.pdf>).

Street Trees: Waikato District Council's District Tree Policy addresses issues relating to the recognition, strategic planning, management and long-term continuity of the tree resource within the District, and provides policy in relation planting, maintenance, removal, subdivision and development, and planting within the road corridor.



3. SITE AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS

For any new development within a Business Town Centre Zone, a site and contextual analysis is required to be submitted by the applicant as part of the overall design statement, to assist in understanding how the proposal responds to the specific site characteristics and wider street and town context. As a minimum, this shall include one or more A3 maps or aerials, along with supporting plans, building elevations and notes, to adequately illustrate the elements outlined within Section 3.2 (Outcomes Sought), as deemed applicable.

3.1 Overview

Careful site and context analysis can directly benefit existing and new town centres through the design of new developments which add positively to the character, amenity and wider urban design outcomes of the area.

3.2 Outcomes Sought

- A site and contextual analysis that assists to illustrate how the proposed land use responds to its immediate context – including surrounding buildings, open space and public realm, street networks and other land uses.

3.3 Guidelines for Site and Context analysis

- Identify pedestrian mobility patterns (i.e. to / from public transport, parking areas, community services) and try to enable through site links to increase options for connectivity.
- Consider possible options to share driveway access and parking areas with neighbouring sites.
- Identify any opportunities to connect with neighbouring sites' internal lanes – to enhance walkability for pedestrians, and strengthen connections.
- Identify the development potential of surrounding land and neighbouring sites – reach out to neighbours and Council to discuss shared interests.
- Identify the surrounding character, heritage, cultural elements and values that can be integrated into the building and site composition. Reference to heritage buildings within the wider local environment may be appropriate.
- Take into account the wider surroundings, including natural features (topography, vegetation), views to other buildings, parks, river and beach - and consider the opportunities to relate the building and site to these, the street and the public realm.



Figure 1. Diagram showing elements that should be considered as part of wider town centre analysis; the level of analysis will commiserate with the size and location of proposed development.

4. ARCHITECTURAL FORM AND APPEARANCE

4.1 Overview

Architectural form, building features and placement on a site help to frame the public realm and are critical to determining the character of a place.

4.2 Outcomes Sought

- To encourage new developments that fit within the existing context – of a scale, form and appearance (building articulation) that is appropriate and adds positively to the existing character of the area.
- To encourage new developments to sensitively respond to the site and its setting and create a place that is valued and pleasing to the eye.

Importantly, maintaining and enhancing character does not mean mimicking or imitating existing built form; rather it is about recognising and re-interpreting those existing elements that add positively to the look and feel of an environment (e.g. refer Figure 3) and, in doing so, establishing a meaningful and recognisable style (character) and rhythm of built form.

4.3 Guidelines

- Break up the mass of buildings with large footprints, so the bulk is read as two or more smaller forms that reflect the rhythm and scale of the surrounding buildings and wider town centre - creating a more intimate human scale.
- Utilise different façade materials, colours and design elements - such as parapets, fenestration, chimneys, and downpipes - to create modulation that relates the building to the surrounding built context and reinforces the human scale.
- Design buildings with a roof form that responds to the predominant form and character of the area (i.e. traditional pitched roofs with gables, or hipped shapes – with or without traditional parapets).
- Design buildings to respond to the predominant height, scale and form of the area. Along predominantly two-storey main retail streets, a third storey (if permitted through the District Plan) shall be set back from the street elevation to create a consistent street wall height and better integration with adjacent buildings.
- Design facades above ground level to continue the vertical modulation and rhythm of the level below – so that blank walls do not dominate any part of a façade.
- Align horizontal elements in façades to adjoining buildings so there is a continuity in the street façade.
- Design corner buildings to:
 - Be two to three storey, as they become visual references and landmarks in the urban fabric, reinforcing significant street and intersections.
 - Have their main pedestrian entry fronting the intersection, creating an active public realm.
 - Ensure the design treatments are continued around both sides of the corner.
 - Locate any carpark, vehicle access points, loading or service areas at the rear of the site.



Figure 2. Break up mass of buildings through vertical elements; set back upper stories where appropriate; provide for continuous horizontal elements.



Figure 3. Precedent Image: New buildings should reflect the rhythm, scale and form of adjoining buildings.



Figure 4. Precedent Image: Stepping back the third storey of the building can assist to maintain a human scale when viewed from the street, and remain in keeping with adjoining buildings.

5. STREET AND PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

5.1 Overview

An essential design element for buildings located within a town centre is the interface between people, public realm and the activities that occur inside the building. The design of this interface contributes to the vibrancy, character and commercial viability of a town centre.

5.2 Outcomes Sought

- To enhance the public realm and improve pedestrian safety and amenity by:
 - Encouraging buildings to have clearly defined public fronts that address, engage with, and activate adjacent streets and public spaces.
 - Ensuring main retail streets are edged with a continuous line of building frontages.

5.3 Guidelines

- Align buildings to sit along the front property line. Variations in setback from the front boundary are appropriate when the resulting setback provides greater accommodation for pedestrian circulation, sidewalk dining areas, enhanced entries, and improves the pedestrian realm. No parking shall be allowed in this front setback area.
- Provide a continuous building frontage for main retail streets and avoid side yard setbacks between buildings, except for sites where an access to the rear or a lane is provided.
- Maximise outlook onto adjacent streets and public open spaces, through considered design of the buildings internal space and maximised façade transparency.
- Design the building so that the main pedestrian entry is located along the primary frontage – so that it is clearly visible and conveniently located.
- Locate the most active ground floor uses such as shopfronts, lobbies, and restaurant dining areas fronting the street / public realm.
- Seek to provide a consistency in the alignment and design of the verandahs. Providing variation in materials and transparency for visual interest and daylighting is appropriate.
- Consider the appropriateness of a new verandah when refurbishing character buildings as it could impact building character. If there is not a precedent of a pre-existing verandah, a glass canopy could be a suitable option.
- Design signage in a way that does not dominate the façade and the streetscape.
- Avoid fences along front boundaries of streets within the town centre; where fences are required, limit the height to 1.2m in height, to maintain openness and passive surveillance.

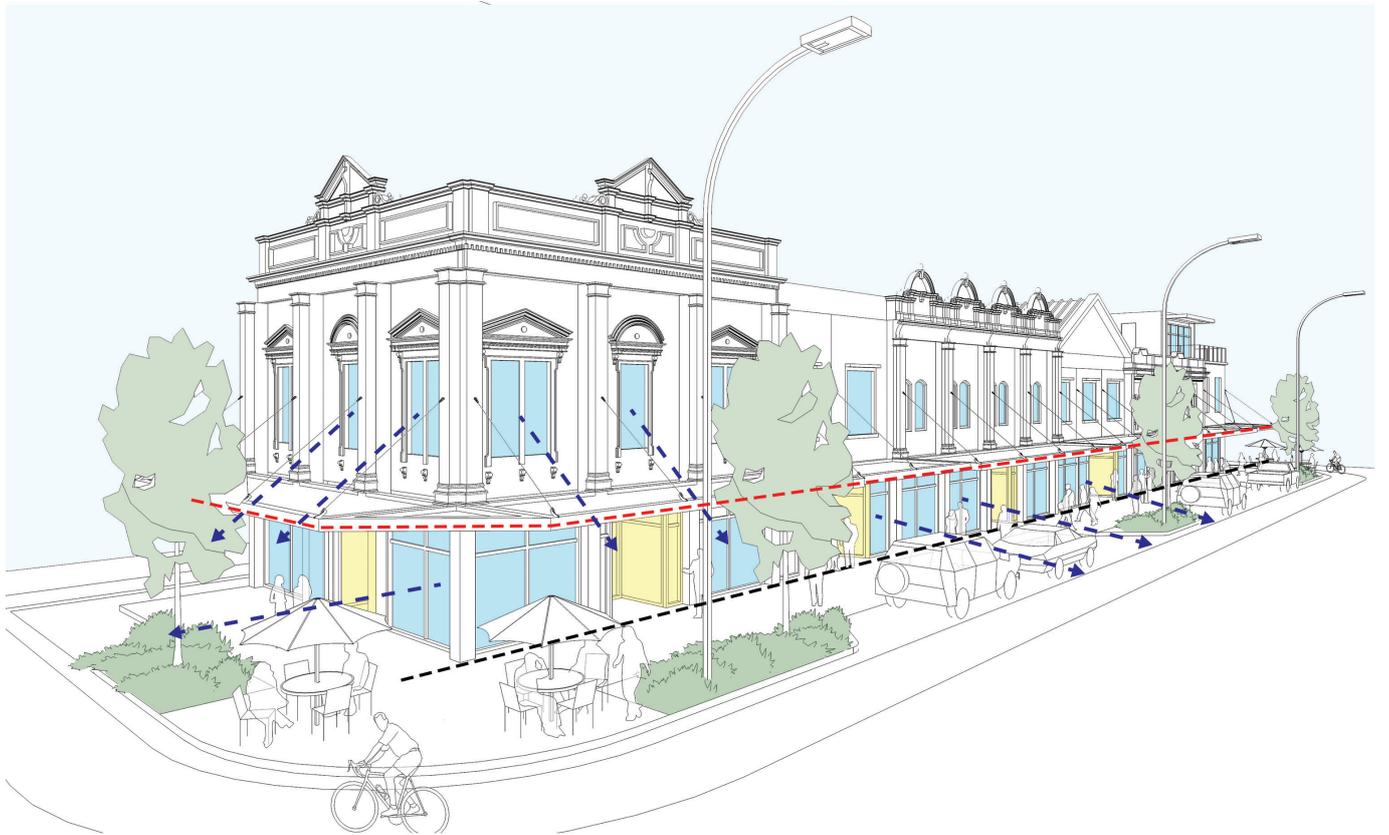


Figure 5. Align buildings to sit along the front property line; maximise outlook onto adjacent streets and public open spaces, through considered design of the buildings internal space and maximised façade transparency.



Figure 6. Precedent Image: The combination of a consistent verandah alignment with varied architectural styles provides both coherence and variety.



Figure 7. Precedent Image: Signs are of a size and position that they generally do not detract from the streetscape.

6. OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE TREATMENT

6.1 Overview

- Landscape treatment, lighting, street furniture, and other streetscape elements are key components of a wider spatial perception, and can help reinforce an area's existing character, creating a more unified and welcoming town centre.
- Well-designed open spaces and streetscapes (including pedestrian lanes and internal courts) will encourage people to move through and interact with these spaces, further enlivening a town centre and complementing adjacent land uses.

6.2 Outcomes Sought

- To promote inclusive, accessible, conveniently located and well-designed public open spaces that provide for a range of different activities catering to people of different ages, cultures, abilities and level of fitness
- To facilitate public places that are safe - integrating Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and maximising opportunities for adjacent land uses to activate these spaces.
- To provide landscape design that responds to the characteristics and qualities of the area.

6.3 Guidelines

- Locate buildings to activate or overlook areas of public open space. This will improve the perceived safety and encourage use of these open spaces.
- Consider universal design principles when interfacing with areas of public open space so that these areas are accessible to all users – whatever their ability, with equity and dignity
- Prioritise high exposure to direct sunlight and shelter from prevailing winds to create appealing places for rest and recreation.
- Utilise materials for pavement, street furniture and lights that are difficult to vandalize (anti-graffiti) and easy to maintain.
- Avoid “dark areas” (areas that are not overlooked, not well lit, or hidden from view) and blank walls. This combination is likely to attract graffiti and other undesirable activities. Instead, introduce appropriate landscape treatment, lighting, and ensure neighbouring land uses provide windows that overlook and activate these spaces.
- Buildings facing a pedestrian lane shall have ground level openings (windows or doors) to provide connection with the public space, and allow natural surveillance of the walkway.
- In dialogue with Council, determine whether lighting of publicly accessible spaces will improve or decrease safe use of the proposed space; where lighting is considered appropriate, provide adequate lighting levels for all users. Refer to the AS/NZS 1158 lighting standards for further guidance.

Street trees and planting

- Plant landscape areas with species that are low maintenance and hardy. Species selection shall provide an emphasis on native or indigenous plants that are appropriate to the site and landscape character of the area.
- Select appropriate street trees to enable sunlight penetration on streets and within adjoining public open spaces during winter months.
- Ensure that landscaping preserves important views and vistas.
- Avoid low shrubs or low canopy trees that block sightlines of pedestrians and vehicles

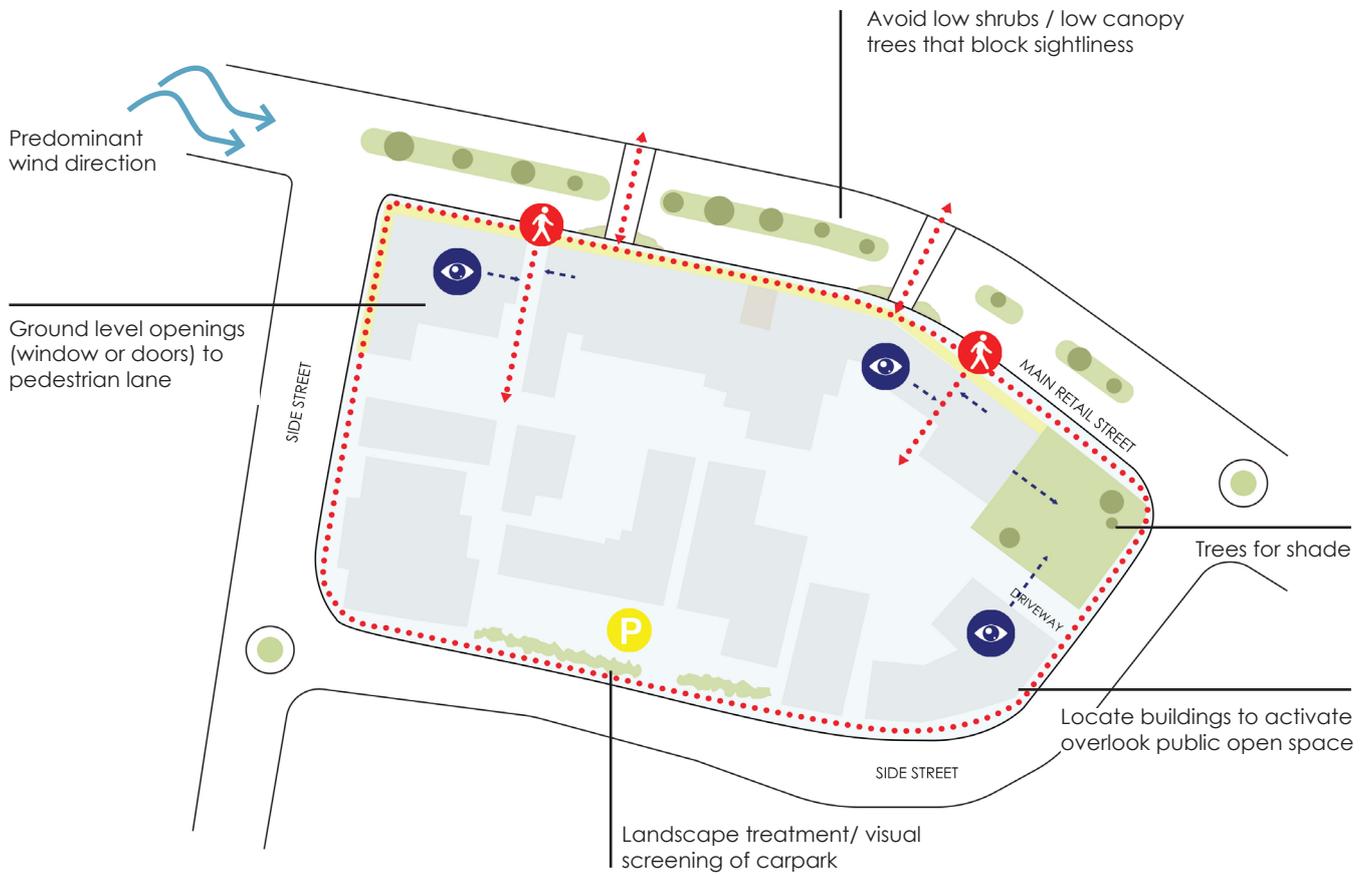


Figure 8. Concept plan showing key elements to consider as part of open space and landscape treatment.



Figure 9. Precedent Image: Buildings activating and overlooking open space.



Figure 10. Precedent Image: Laneway overlooked by adjoining building / cafe.

7. MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

7.1 Overview

- Creating a positive relationship between the sometimes conflicting needs of services, vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists helps to create safe, inclusive and vibrant spaces. Town centres that provide safe, legible, attractive and equitable movement networks are inclusive spaces that encourage people to use and activate the public realm.

7.2 Outcomes Sought

- To promote greater pedestrian movement and limit potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
- To minimise the visual and amenity impacts of accessways and parking facilities whilst maximising pedestrian safety and street activation (through site configuration and landscape treatment).
- To promote sustainable transportation modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- To promote local permeability and integration.

7.3 Guidelines

- Consider universal access design principles at all stages of development – so that buildings and public spaces are designed to be accessible to all users - whatever their ability, with equity and dignity.
- Design new developments to ensure that any required accessway / parking facility does not visually dominate the public realm or create obstructions in the pedestrian environment.
- Provide vehicular access to new developments from side streets, adjacent alleys, and parallel streets whenever possible.
- Provide landscape treatment for large at-grade car parking areas – with trees selected that provide shade, improve amenity, and assist in visual screening – whilst allowing clear sightlines between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Encourage accessibility and local permeability through integration with neighbouring developments.
- Design vehicle crossings to minimise potential pedestrian / vehicle conflict and clearly give preference to pedestrians over vehicles, giving continuity to the footpath through the design (i.e. levels, materials, surface finishes, colours etc.).
- Provide a clear and direct pedestrian route from on-site parking to the building entry and public walkway. The circulation path shall be direct, continuous, and free of barriers (e.g., site equipment, signage, utility poles, etc.).
- Design pedestrian access ways in a manner consistent CPTED principles, facilitating passive surveillance and adequate lighting, with clear sight lines between the public realm and adjoining land uses.
- Design loading and service areas to be concealed from view within the building envelope or, preferably, located to the rear of the site.
- Provide for rubbish storage areas, including an area for recycling, concealed from view from street and from neighbouring properties.

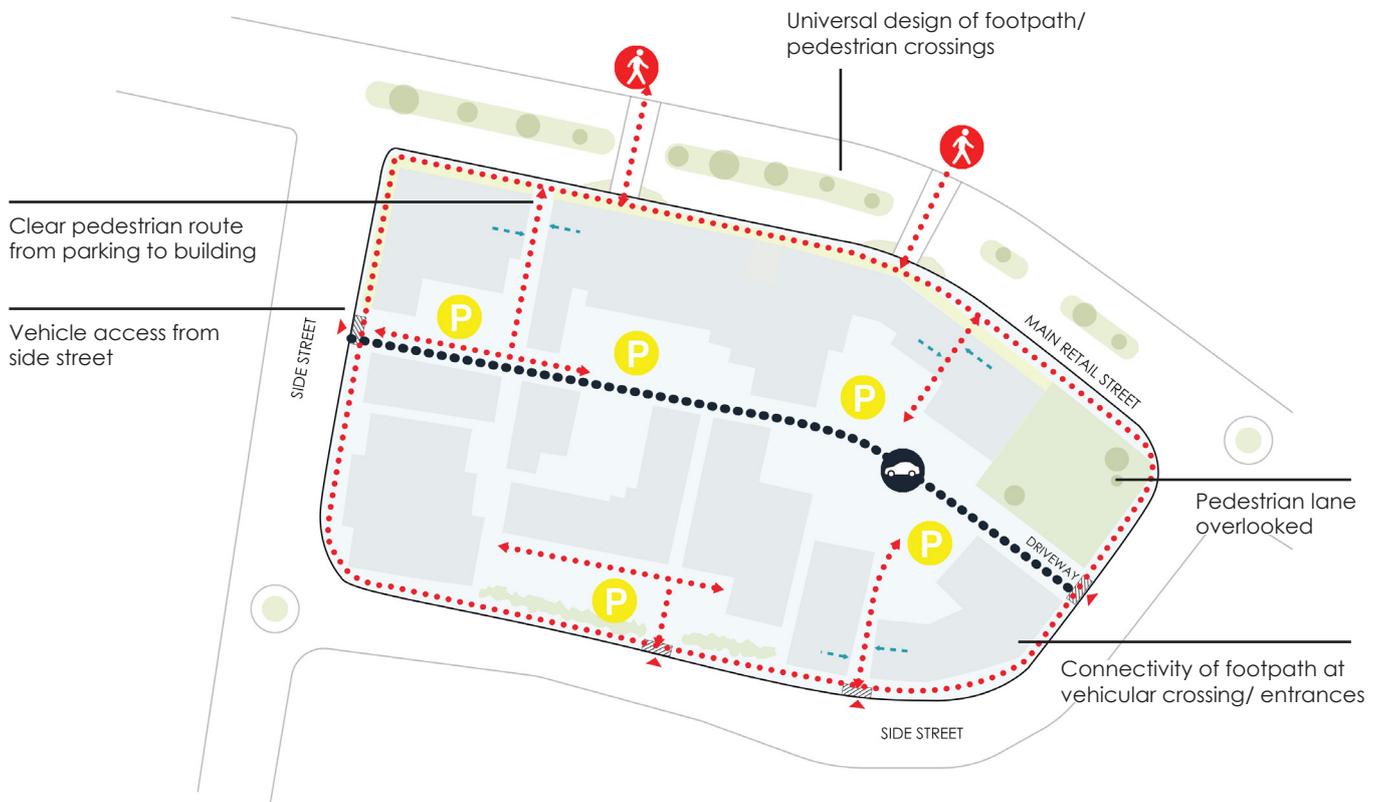


Figure 11. Concept plan showing key elements to consider as part of movement and access.



Figure 12. Precedent Image: Clear pedestrian route from car park to buildings and landscape treatment within car park.



Figure 13. Precedent Image: Pedestrian priority crossing at vehicle crossing.

8. MIXED USE

8.1 Overview

Mixed use in town centres contributes to more active and vibrant communities – with residents sharing the street space with employers, employees and customers. It brings a sense of activation – particularly at night or outside of business hours, and may result in economic benefits through the introduction of new business opportunities to the area (such as hospitality).

The primary design challenge associated with mixed-use projects is the need to successfully balance the requirements of residential activities, such as the need for privacy and security, with the needs of commercial activities, such as access, visibility, parking, loading, and the possibility of extended hours of operation. The following guidelines seek to minimise this challenge and provide an appropriate design response.

8.2 Outcomes Sought

- To enable town centre living opportunities without compromising residential living standards
- To provide an increased diversity of housing options for people of all ages, physical abilities, incomes and demographics.
- To reduce car dependence in the town centre through providing options to live where you work.

8.3 Guidelines

- Locate pedestrian entrances on the street frontage and design them to be clearly identifiable and conveniently accessible from the street.
- Provide separated pedestrian entrances for residential uses within mixed use buildings. These shall generally be accessed from the main street. Independent pedestrian entrance to residential upper floors from a rear lane may be provided only from lanes that link through to another street or public space, and where the design provides for a high level of pedestrian amenity and safety. This option would need to be supported by a detailed landscape plan – illustrating areas of hard and soft landscaping as well as proposed lighting.
- When providing parking in a mixed residential site, ensure that a number of those are reserved for residents. Parking areas shall adhere to CPTED principles (i.e. lighting, passive surveillance, CCTV) and be secured after business hours.
- Provide private and/or semi-private outdoor living spaces for residents in mixed use buildings. Locate and design these spaces to have good solar access and a reasonable level of privacy.
- Protect the privacy of residents in adjacent single-family homes - by utilizing translucent or louvered windows, offsetting window patterns and stepping back the upper floors of mixed use buildings.
- Locate mechanical equipment and other sources of noise and odours (such as kitchen ventilation and air conditioning) well above the street level, so as not to detract from the amenity of the street users or the residents living above. Consider the provision of vertical ventilation ducts from the street level retail space to the roof of the building.
- Design the layout and elevations of residential use in mixed use buildings to have habitable rooms overlooking circulation space and commonly used areas, increasing the sense of surveillance after business hours.

9. ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

9.1 Overview

Environmentally sustainable design promotes buildings and communities that are healthier, more energy efficient and more sustainable.

Adherence to the following outcomes and guidelines is not mandatory; rather where development responds positively to the following outcomes and guidelines, this will be considered alongside the overall merits of the proposal, particularly where other desired urban design outcomes are not considered achievable.

9.2 Outcomes Sought

- To promote designs which reduce potential environmental impacts, create healthy and appealing places of business and are future-facing (anticipating future trends or issues).

9.3 Guidelines

- Maximise solar access and natural ventilation – minimising the need for energy consumption by reducing reliance on air conditioning and artificial lighting.
- Give preference to building materials with thermal insulating properties, produced by low energy means, and using renewable or recyclable resources.
- Aim to achieve high energy efficient ratings for the development in any accredited system for energy efficient building design and maintenance.
- Consider the use of porous pavement as a substitute for conventional pavement in low traffic areas such as walkways.
- Consider the reduction of water consumption for landscaping through the use of native plants and the collection of rainwater.
- Utilise water sensitive urban design techniques to treat stormwater runoff from car parks and passively irrigate vegetation.
- Promote building adaptability through the design of flexible internal spaces – with simple, open-plan volumes.
- Provision of facilities for electric cars, such as charging stations.



Figure 14. Precedent Image: Use of porous pavement materials within car parks will reduce stormwater runoff.



Figure 15. Precedent Image: Use of rain gardens and other low impact design techniques within car parks will reduce stormwater runoff.