

Appendix 1: Information Pamphlet

have your say

October 2011

Urban Design District and Local Centres

Issues and options consultation

Christchurch
City Council 

Your ideas are welcome

Christchurch City Council seeks your views on the city's district and local centres (known as the Business 1 and Business 2 zones), such as Edgeware Shopping Centre and Barrington Mall, to guide future development for these areas.

Consultation was conducted in 2008 to identify significant issues about the quality of new building developments in these zones, and to consider possible options (including a potential plan change) to address the issues.

Due to recent earthquake events, more than a third of Christchurch's 150 suburban shopping centres are damaged. Their recovery is vital to the social and economic wellbeing of local communities, and the city as a whole.

It has been identified that new developments need to be of a higher quality with better urban design in the Business 1 and 2 zones. High quality district and local centres, close to where people live create interesting and liveable neighbourhoods, reduce transport costs and strengthen communities.

Urban design is about the way that places and spaces look, feel and function.



Image source: Marsden town centre project (Urbanismplus Ltd). Illustration by Neil Coleman, ASAP Ltd

Appendix 1 cont'd: Information Pamphlet

Urban Design - Issues and Options Consultation

DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES: BUSINESS 1 AND BUSINESS 2 ZONES

Current situation

There has been a significant level of public interest over the quality of new developments in our neighbourhood centres and other places where we shop and socialise. This consultation will assist the Council to identify any issues and to prioritise possible options for addressing them. By filling in the attached questionnaire and returning it to the Council your views on the quality of new developments can be taken into account.

The area of Christchurch that is being assessed includes the suburban malls and the neighbourhood shopping centres. Technically, these are described in the City Plan as the Business 1 (Local Centre/District Centre Fringe) Zones, Business 2 (District Centre) Zones, including Business 2P (District Centre - Parking) Zones, and are shown on the map at the back of this brochure.

While the suburban malls and neighbourhood shopping centres are clearly different from each other, the reason this project focuses on these areas is that they are primary retail areas that are currently undergoing significant change and development. The Council has begun the Suburban Centres Programme, which is developing master plans for the most affected centres. For other affected centres case managers will be available. This process has engaged many of the landowners and residents within and surrounding the city's suburban centres.

The purpose of this consultation is to build on the outcomes of these master plans, and to generate options that may lead to more effective methods to guide and assist the recovery and development of these areas, including new District Plan rules.

Christchurch context

Christchurch's district and local centres (Business 1 and Business 2 Zones) range in size and function. Some are malls that have a large range of community facilities and services which cater for large numbers of people on a daily basis. Others are small blocks of a few shops providing convenience shopping and services for the surrounding neighbourhood.

The way these centres cater for and function for our communities is important. They support people living around them by providing places for people to meet, live and work. They are located near public transport routes and can be easily reached on foot or by bike. Their relationship to neighbouring houses and community facilities such as libraries helps make an attractive and liveable neighbourhood.

Why is good urban design important?

While urban design is part of the current City Plan, there is growing recognition that further and enhanced urban design controls may improve the quality of new developments and their relationship to public spaces. A range of options were further detailed in the 2008 Urban Design Issues and Options Study which is available to view on the Christchurch City Council website:

www.ccc.govt.nz/HaveYourSay

Urban design is the art of making a great city. It involves not only the appearance but also the function and feel of buildings and public spaces including streets. Urban design focuses on public frontages and spaces and addresses elements such as streetscape, walkability, sustainable design, mixed use development and 'active edges' (of building frontages), people's safety and accessibility.

Good urban design can both add value to a development and enrich its setting. A design that is complementary to its neighbourhood and prioritises pedestrian access can provide both an inviting setting and create a thriving development with benefits for both developers and the public.

Feedback

Public feedback is sought - please complete the following questionnaire and return the post-paid section to Christchurch City Council by 4 November 2011.

www.ccc.govt.nz/HaveYourSay

Email: B1B2Centres@ccc.govt.nz

General enquiries: 03 941 8999 or 0800 800 169

Specific enquiries:

Clare Piper, Planner 03 941 6470

Josie Schroder, Urban Designer 027 818 1749

Appendix 1 cont'd: Information Pamphlet

Some of the key issues that the Council has identified in district and local centres are:

THINKING ABOUT YOUR DISTRICT OR LOCAL CENTRE

Where are we?

- > Do new developments match the character and feeling of your local centre?
- > Do new developments keep key landmarks and views?



What is happening next door?

- > Do new developments fit in well with the buildings beside them?
- > Are they the same height and scale as the surrounding buildings?
- > Do they detract from or complement nearby heritage buildings?



What happens on the street edge?

- > How do new developments face the street?
- > Do they have activities, doors and large windows along the street front?
- > Do they provide protection from the weather when you're walking down the street?



How do they look?

- > Do new developments use high quality materials?
- > Do you like their design? What makes it good?
- > Do they make the district and local centre look better?



How do I get there?

- > Is the front door able to be clearly seen?
- > Can you get there on foot or by bus?
- > Is the entrance directly onto the street or are they within a car park?

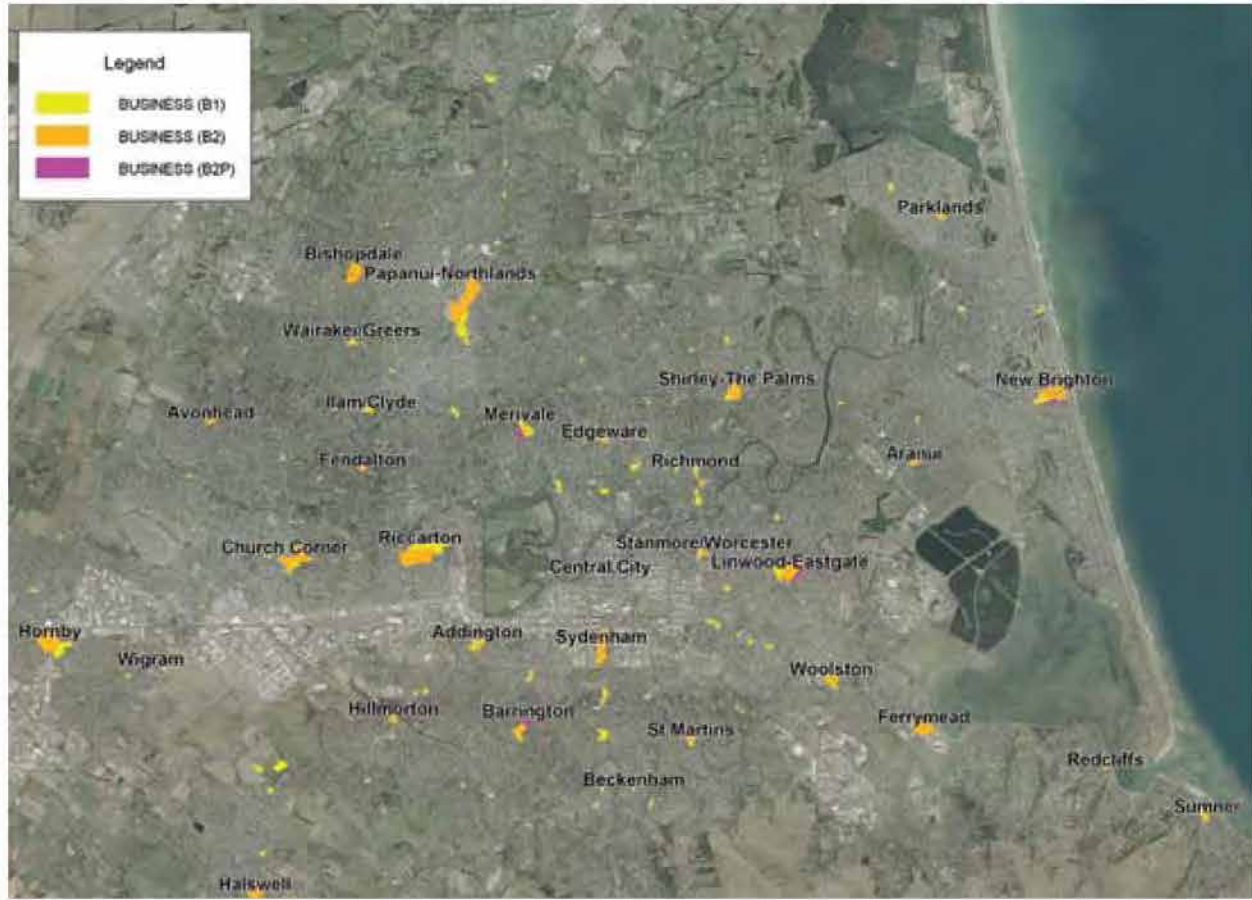


Does it feel safe?

- > Do you feel safe when you are walking around the centre?
- > Are the footpaths separated from traffic? Are they wide enough?
- > Is graffiti, vandalism or litter a problem in your centre?



Appendix 1 cont'd: Information Pamphlet



Find out more

Open days:

Wednesday 19 October 2011
ASB Football Park (English Park)
127 Cranford Street, St Albans
3pm - 6pm

Thursday 20 October 2011
St Johns Anglican Church Hall
Corner of Ferry Road and St Johns Street, Woolston
3pm - 6pm

CANCELLED

Members of the public are invited to drop in anytime between 3pm - 6pm

Appendix 2: Copy of submission form cont'd

All responses should be received by the Council by **4 November 2011**

Name: _____

Organisation (if applicable): _____

Organisation role (if applicable): _____

Contact Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ Date: _____

Please note:

Upon request, we are legally required to make all written or electronic submissions available to the public, including the name and address of the submitter, subject to the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. If you consider there to be compelling reasons why your contact details and/or submission should be kept confidential, you should contact the Council's Consultation Manager, telephone 941-8999.

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FREEPOST Authority No.178



Attn. Clare Piper
Strategy and Planning Group
Christchurch City Council
PO Box 73012
Christchurch Mail Centre
Christchurch 8140

Appendix 3: Public notices

Public Notice 1
The Mail
Wednesday 5th October 2011



**Christchurch
City Council**

**SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTRES
ISSUES AND OPTIONS
CONSULTATION**

The Christchurch City Council is considering changing its City Plan to improve aspects of urban design and parking in its suburban shopping centres (Business 1 and 2 Zones).

The aim is to help guide new buildings and development of these centres to improve the way they look and feel, make them more pedestrian friendly and improve the way they fit in with the surrounding residential areas.

Your feedback is needed to help the Council identify issues and to prioritise possible options for addressing them.

Come along to one of the drop-in sessions anytime between 3pm and 6pm:

Wednesday 19 October 2011
ASB Football Park (English Park)
127 Cranford Street, St Albans

Thursday 20 October 2011
St Johns Anglican Church Hall
Corner of Ferry Road and St Johns Street, Woolston

Further information can be found at www.ccc.govt.nz/HaveYourSay.

Brigitte de Ronde
PROGRAMME MANAGER DISTRICT PLANNING
www.ccc.govt.nz

Public Notice 2
The Star
Friday 14th October 2011

**NOTICE OF CHANGE TO
SUBURBAN SHOPPING CENTRES - ISSUES
AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION
PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS PROJECT IS NOW
KNOWN AS URBAN DESIGN –
DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES**

The Christchurch City Council is considering changing its City Plan to improve aspects of urban design and parking in its suburban shopping centres (Business 1 and 2 Zones).

The aim is to help guide new buildings and development of these centres to improve the way they look and feel, make them more pedestrian friendly and improve the way they fit in with the surrounding residential areas.

Your feedback is needed to help the Council identify issues and to prioritise possible options for addressing them.

Come along to the drop-in session anytime between 3pm and 6pm:

Wednesday 19 October 2011
ASB Football Park (English Park)
127 Cranford Street, St Albans

Note: The drop-in session for Thursday 20 October 2011 at the St Johns Anglican Church Hall, Corner of Ferry Road and St Johns Street Woolston, has been cancelled.

Further information can be found at www.ccc.govt.nz/HaveYourSay

Mike Theelen
GENERAL MANAGER STRATEGY & PLANNING

MEMORANDUM



TO: Clare Piper

FROM: James Winchester, Joshua McGettigan, Mark Leslie, Julia Steenson

DATE: 8 November 2012

SUBJECT: Review of Urban Design Case Law

1. You have asked us to provide a summary of urban design case law to assist with the preparation of Plan Change 56 to the Christchurch District Plan, with a particular focus on issues of amenity and character.
2. We provide an executive summary in this memorandum, which describes themes and key findings identified from the case law review. We also attach two appendices:
 - (a) Appendix One: a case law summary table, showing the urban design factors, issues, outcomes and general legal principles identified from the cases reviewed.
 - (b) Appendix Two: a glossary describing the meanings of the subject areas used for grouping issues in the summary table.

Nature of Review

Methodology for Identifying Cases

3. The Brookers environmental case law database was searched for all cases containing the term "urban design" since the beginning of November 2008 (which is when the Ministry for the Environment case law review (**MfE Report**) was published).¹ That search resulted in over 70 hits. Cases within that list for which the Court had substantively considered urban design matters were selected from that list, which left 30 cases. Those cases were reviewed and are summarised in Appendix One.
4. Three decisions released prior to the beginning of November 2008 were also reviewed, on the grounds that they are generally regarded as important urban design cases. Summaries of these cases are also contained in Appendix One. However, the focus of this review has strongly been on how urban design case law has developed since the MfE Report was published.

Methodology for Reviewing Cases

5. Given the integrated, comprehensive, subjective, and often extremely detailed nature of urban design decisions, it would not be pragmatic to provide an exhaustive, detailed summary of all urban design factors, issues and outcomes contained in cases we have reviewed. The case summary provided in Appendix One therefore does not do this. Cases were rather reviewed to identify the key urban design factors, issues, outcomes, and general legal principles that they covered, and these details were then entered into the summary table.

¹ *Review of Urban Design Case Law: New Zealand Urban Design Protocol*, Ministry for the Environment, November 2008.

6. The summary table should therefore be used as a general record of the issues that the Court was concerned with, and the approaches to urban design that it considered appropriate, on the facts and policy context before it. The review has focussed more on matters of amenity and character than other urban design factors, although other urban design factors are also covered.

Amenity

Connectivity

7. Connectivity, or the connected (as opposed to piecemeal) development of areas, was an urban design concept considered appropriate in several cases reviewed. That included in policies regarding the design of a stormwater network and open spaces and reserves for a large residential development (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 8)* [2010] NZEnvC 321), and the impact of revocation of pedestrian mall status of a street on pedestrian connectivity between a retail centre and nearby waterfront (*The City is Ours Inc v Wellington City Council* [2010] NZEnvC 115).
8. However, the Environment Court was prepared in one decision to subordinate connectivity to ensure as much development occurred as soon as possible, in the difficult business and development climate (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185). The Court in that case declined a proposed housing numbers cap on development where only one access point existed to the block, also describing the cap as "too heavy-handed", and lacking evidence to show it would be effective or efficient.

Landscaping

9. Landscaping was a very common mitigation measure for adverse effects on amenity, invariably being recommended for use in carparks, to offset the adverse effects of signage, and along roadsides. Generally the Court showed a particular preference for the use of native trees over non-native:
- (a) amending some conditions previously requiring non-native trees as mitigation to instead require native trees (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135; *Cross Roads Properties Ltd v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 177); and
 - (b) more generally promoting the planting of locally sourced native trees for landscaping (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185).
10. The Environment Court was also prepared to use landscaping to target adverse amenity effects more directly; recommending a condition requiring that trees be planted to obscure brightly coloured corporate signage in order to protect views of outstanding landscapes (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135).

Setbacks

11. Appropriately sized setbacks were considered an important aspect of amenity in most cases reviewed. For example, in one case, a 16 m setback from the boundary of a site for a large format retail proposal was an important condition for complying with policies seeking to protect the amenity values of outstanding landscapes (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District*

Council [2012] NZEnvC 135). By the same token, inappropriately sized setbacks could also contribute to the declining of development proposals, such as for a plan change promoting residential development on the Wellington waterfront (*Waterfront Watch Inc v Wellington City Council* [2012] NZEnvC 74).

Colours

12. Soft, recessive colours and earthy tones were generally considered to be the most appropriate colours for use in proposals for development in areas with important views, or residential outlooks. For example, this was considered appropriate in:
 - (a) successful proposals for large format retail (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135; *Cross Roads Properties Ltd v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 177);
 - (b) a successful proposal for a 141-unit residential apartment slightly isolated from surrounding suburban buildings (*ORC Ltd v Auckland City Council* EnvC Auckland A058/09, 26 July 2009); and
 - (c) approved rules for development in a plan change providing for a mixed use district centre (*Kiwi Property Holdings Ltd v Christchurch City Council* [2012] NZEnvC 92).

Underground carparking

13. Decisions reviewed showed a preference against underground carparking, primarily for safety and amenity reasons. In one case, the use of an above-ground carpark in a large format retail proposal was considered appropriate even where district plan policy encouraged the use of underground carparks. In that case, the Court noted that underground carparking would not advance other safety-related policies, and that above-ground carparking, with associated planting, would provide open space and amenity benefits (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135). In another, a policy promoting underground carparking in a plan change seeking to allow for taller buildings in a residential area was found not to maintain or enhance the amenity of residential areas (*Orewa Land Ltd v Auckland Council* [2011] NZEnvC 238).

Permeable Fences

14. Some decisions showed a preference for permeable rather than solid fences on property boundaries. For example, one decision considered that provision ought to be made for permeable rather than solid fences to assist visual linking of grassed open space to provide for amenity in a residential zone (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185).

Frontages

15. The use of "active" frontages to provide for amenity was a commonly considered and applied urban design concept. In one case, the Environment Court implied that "attractive" frontage was a lesser requirement than active frontage, considering that a native tree planting, careful design of a building and 16 metre setback sufficiently achieved it (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135). One decision approved requirements for active frontage perimeters for certain ground level facades in a mixed use zone (*Kiwi Property Holdings Ltd v Christchurch City Council* [2012] NZEnvC 92). Another, interim decision considered a landscape treatment rule helpful in

considering design elements for a large format retail proposal with no active frontage (*Laidlaw College Inc v Auckland Council* [2011] NZEnvC 248)

"Continuous Facades"

16. In one decision, the Court stated that continuous facades can be a problem in certain contexts, but that they can also deliver aesthetically pleasing results. Although not deciding the matter, the Court considered that a rule discouraging continuous facades would deny developers of a useful urban design concept (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185).

Character

"Fit" with surrounding environment

17. Generally, whether a proposal fits with the character (or collective traits and qualities) of the existing environment continues to be the key yardstick for assessing the appropriateness of its urban design. For example, a major reason in declining a proposal for a residential subdivision in a rural environment was that the proposal would "transform" the rural character of the environment to one of an urban residential nature (*Mason Heights Property Trust v Auckland Council* [2011] NZEnvC 175).

Focus on the actual environment

18. The actual environment was focussed on when determining character. This could over-ride Council intentions for the development of an area. In one case, the existence of a structure plan seeking to maintain a lower density environment did not stop the Environment Court from approving a private plan change to increase that density (*Spinnaker Bay Ltd v Manukau City Council* EnvC Auckland A004/09, 21 January 2009). The Environment Court noted that the larger minimum lot size provided in the structure plan was unlikely to better reflect the character and amenity of the existing settlement, which was already losing much of the character that the structure plan sought to protect.

Impact of High Quality Design

19. High quality design can mean that a development is appropriate, even if it does not completely "fit" with its surrounding environment. In one case a development was held to optimise amenity for occupiers of the neighbourhood even though it was different from some surrounding buildings, because the development had a high quality design (*Quetta Street Protection Society v Wellington City Council* EnvC Wellington W030/09, 28 April 2009).

Character policies are to be considered "in the round"

20. In one case the Environment Court considered whether certain buildings should be listed as "character buildings" on two approaches to the plan's policies on character – one being a holistic assessment, and the other being a "silo" approach. The Court preferred the holistic assessment to the "silo" approach, considering that the silo approach would significantly affect the implementation of the plan change's settled vision for the area (*Art Deco Soc (Auckland) Inc v Auckland Council* [2012] NZEnvC 125).

Heritage

Specific Heritage Policies

21. In two decisions reviewed the Environment Court considered quite specific heritage policies. In one, the Court's approval of proposed heritage policies contributed to a Council's overall suite of policies being preferred to a developer's. The Council's policies provided for management of specific activities to safeguard historic heritage sites, whereas the developer's policies focussed only on new developments (*Long Bay - Okura Great Park Society Inc v North Shore City Council (No 2)* [2010] NZEnvC 319).
22. In another, a proposal to construct an apartment building was successful despite proposing to demolish parts of a heritage building and relocate other parts, because a specific heritage policy adequately protected the historic parts of the site worth protecting (*Atkinson v North Shore City Council* [2010] NZEnvC 260). The policy had been prepared in consultation with the property owner and interested parties from the community, and detailed what may be done to the site by way of redevelopment.

Economic values against heritage values

23. One case considered the appropriateness of placing a notice of requirement over certain land to protect its cultural and heritage values, rather than including it in a zoning change for urban development of the surrounding area (*Gavin H Wallace Ltd v Auckland Council* [2012] NZEnvC 120). The Environment Court cancelled the notice of requirement over the site and included it in the urban development zoning, considering that not doing so would "lock the land up" and not provide for the economic needs and well-being of its owners.

Environmental compensation and heritage values

24. The Court has shown its willingness to accept environmental compensation in exchange for adverse effects on heritage values. For example, one decision considered that, although minor, the adverse effects on heritage of demolishing a heritage building were offset by the enhancement and redevelopment of a nearby wharf (*Waterfront Watch Inc v Wellington Regional Council* EnvC Wellington W043/09, 9 June 2009).

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and buildings outside development areas

25. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (**NZCPS**) requirements of identifying and protecting historic heritage from inappropriate development are relevant for urban design of development near coastlines, and have been held to apply to areas outside the bounds of a proposal. One case considered the NZCPS in relation to a variation promoting waterfront development in Wellington (*Waterfront Watch Inc v Wellington City Council* [2012] NZEnvC 74). The decision held that the proposed variation failed to identify various heritage buildings and features which, although some of them fell outside the development area, set the context for use and development in the area. This was a major reason for the Court considering that the variation would not protect historic heritage from inappropriate development.

Density

Location of higher density areas

26. The cases reviewed showed a preference for higher density areas to be located close to town centres. One case stated that residential density areas should be located alongside open space corridors, local parks, within close proximity to town nodes and adjacent to primary movement routes (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 8)* [2010] NZEnvC 321). Conversely, allowing for higher density residential development on a coastal highway rather than around a town centre was labelled in another case as "ribbon development" and contrary to good planning practice (*Orewa Land Ltd v Auckland Council* [2011] NZEnvC 238).

Relevance of structure plans

27. The Environment Court has continued to place high importance on the contents of structure plans when considering higher density development proposals. In one case, where a variation sought to incorporate a structure plan in its district plan to address population growth, the structure plan was described as "central" to achieving the growth envisaged (*Te Kauwhata Action Group Incorporated v Waikato District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 83). However, where a structure plan has not yet been incorporated into a district plan, the Court has placed little weight on it. In one case, the Court refused to allow a residential subdivision in a rural area despite it being marked for future urban development on a structure plan, where the existing character of the environment was rural (*Mason Heights Property Trust v Auckland Council* [2011] NZEnvC 175).

Movement

Mixed Traffic Lanes

28. The appropriate width of a mixed traffic lane (i.e. for vehicular and non-vehicular use) for a spine road in a high density urban environment was a contentious issue in one case. In reaching its decision, the Court referred to *Austrroads Guide to Traffic Engineering* with approval, determining that the lane width should be 3 metres, and there should be no cycle lanes (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185).

Flexibility associated with Mixed Use zones

29. The Court has shown a greater tolerance for technical shortfalls in respect of accommodating traffic generation associated with a proposal, if the proposal is in a mixed use zone. For example, a shortfall of 37 carparks in a commercial development was found to be acceptable because the mixed occupancies of the proposal meant demand would occur at different times throughout the day and evening (*Hamilton East Community Trust v Hamilton City Council* [2010] NZEnvC 176).

Absorbing increases in vehicle and pedestrian movements

30. Landscaping and setback requirements have been considered sufficient for mitigating an increase in vehicle and pedestrian movements. In one case the Court approved a proposal for a pre-school in a residential environment because it was considered that a wide reserve, large setback and mature vegetation would absorb the increase (*ELC (2008) Ltd v Selwyn District Council* EnvC Christchurch C053/09, 4 August 2009).

Local Streets, Pedestrians, Cyclists and Public Transport

31. One case approved a series of policies providing for local streets, pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport for a residential development (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185). Those policies included a minimum distance around urban development blocks, materials to be used for footpaths, different colours for shared cycle lanes, and a minimum walking distance for public transport availability.

Commerce*Economic interests of development prioritised*

32. The decisions reviewed show that the Environment Court is aware of the dulling effects the global financial crisis has had on development, and is reluctant to make decisions that will deter or defer development. For example, the Court refused to stage rules for subdivision despite there being a risk that development could otherwise proceed in the absence of a confirmed roading layout, due to a reluctance to its reluctance to deter development (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185).

Loss of industrial land supply and other resources – 20% rule

33. The loss of 5% of land protected for "true" industrial use was considered a minor effect in one case (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135), and further clarified by the same judge in a subsequent case (*Cross Roads Properties Ltd v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 177). Both of these cases involved conclusion on this issue by a 2-1 majority. The cases together state that, generally, loss of less than 20% of any resource may, depending on the context, be considered minor, but 20% is an "upper limit" above which in most reasonably foreseeable circumstances, the Court will not be able to find that an effect was only minor.

Large format retail and town centres

34. Courts consider it appropriate to locate large format retail outside of town centres where there is no evidence that a proposal would disperse activity away from existing and proposed centres. It is considered normal for such proposals to locate in industrial business areas (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135). However, it was also held that, even where the parties were agreed that a large format retail proposal would not have any effects beyond what other permitted activities in a zone would have, the proposal should still be refused due to the adverse precedent of allowing it (*Stirling v Christchurch City Council* [2010] NZEnvC 401).

Urban Growth*Subservience of stormwater network to "green spaces"*

35. One interim decision of the Court concerned the objectives, policies and layer diagram for a large, high density residential development (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 8)* [2010] NZEnvC 321). It was considered that the stormwater network design should be subservient to the open spaces, reserves and residential development proposed. This meant that swales, for example, were not an appropriate stormwater solution.

Open Space

36. Open space was an important consideration in almost all cases reviewed. The impacts it has on amenity and character of an environment are highly relevant in for any proposal that raises urban design issues.

Roads and open space

37. The Court has stated that, if well designed, roads and streets can be considered open space (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 8)* [2010] NZEnvC 321).

Location of connected open space

38. In the context of assessing layer diagrams for provision of "green" space in a large residential development, the Court has partially used a checklist from a textbook called *Suburban Nation* by J W Prain (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 8)* [2010] NZEnvC 321). It tested a proposed diagram against the rule requiring that large connected areas of open space should be located between neighbourhoods or pass through neighbourhoods as thin greenways.

Public versus private open space

39. The Court has stated that, in a residential development, the provision of a series of easily accessible, safe public neighbourhood parks is to be favoured over privately held "common open spaces" (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 8)* [2010] NZEnvC 321).

Energy

40. We note that this factor was not referred to in the MfE Report. However, two cases reviewed considered policies about managing the use of energy efficiently in an urban design context.
41. Whether a proposal made maximum use of solar heating was relevant in one case (*Brooklynne Holdings Ltd v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2010] NZEnvC 187), and in another case the use of insulation, natural light, passive solar design, heat recovery from refrigeration for hot water and capture of rainwater were considered as achieving a policy requiring the conservation of energy and use of renewable energy sources (*Foodstuffs (South Island) Limited v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2012] NZEnvC 135).

General

Facilitation rather than determination

42. The decisions reviewed show that the Court has a developing practice of facilitating resolution of disputes where possible rather than determining them outright, by giving parties direction in the form of interim decisions and referring matters back to the parties. In one decision where a variation or plan change was outright rejected by the Court, without any proposed alternative, the decision to reject rather than amend was based primarily on the poor drafting of the variation rather than what it sought to achieve (*Waterfront Watch Inc v Wellington City Council* [2012] NZEnvC 74).

Independent Certifier

43. The Court has also stated that the notion of nominating a suitably qualified person, acceptable to all parties, to determine whether urban design requirements are met, is an idea with merit (*Johns Road Horticulture Ltd v Christchurch City Council (No 9)* [2011] NZEnvC 185).

APPENDIX TWO – MEANINGS OF SUBJECT AREA HEADINGS USED IN SUMMARY TABLE

The meanings here are largely the same as used by the MfE Report. Additions have been shown underlined. Note in particular that we have added the new urban design factor "Energy", as a new urban design factor considered in cases we reviewed, which did not fit into any of the previously defined categories.

We have also made additions to the definition of character to reflect the interpretation of the term in *Art Deco Soc (Auckland) Inc v Auckland Council* [2012] NZEnvC 125.

Amenity

The qualities and characteristics of an [urban] place or area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes (from section 2 RMA).

Character

The collective physical qualities and traits of an urban place or area as determined by the combination of building types, age, street pattern, open space, slope, vegetation pattern, mix of land uses and climate.

Heritage

Includes historic sites, structures, places and areas; archaeological sites; sites of significance to Māori, including wāhi tapu and surroundings associated with natural and physical resources [in an urban area] (from section 2 RMA).

Density

The number of rooms or buildings per hectare, including combinations of height and footprint – in this context, this also refers to the process of changing density through infilling or intensification.

Movement

The way in which people and goods are conveyed within and to urban places and areas, including by walking, motorised and self-propelled means and the infrastructure required to facilitate it.

Commerce

The type, location and interaction of businesses within an urban place or area that influence employment opportunities, viability, services and opportunities for growth.

Urban growth

The definition of the extent and location of new urban areas, including the processes and mechanisms for planning the form and patterns of these areas and the implications for change in land use, such as for transport.

Open space

The provision of, or changes to, open spaces within an urban place or area that may be for recreational, aesthetic or natural values.

Energy

The manner in which a building or area uses energy, including with respect to its efficiency, the degree to which it conserves energy, and its use of renewable energy sources.

Plan Change 56 - s32 Report

Urban Design Technical Report

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- A: Plan showing location of B1 and B2 and B2P zones
- B: Urban Design Technical Report (2012)
- C: Appendix A - Site Survey Results (August 2011)
- D: Development of the assessment criteria for site survey work in preparation of the Section 32 Report and draft Plan Change (December 2009)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Christchurch City Council is a signatory of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, which was launched in 2005 by the Ministry for the Environment. In becoming a signatory the Council made a commitment to make Christchurch “more successful through quality urban design”. High quality urban design is integral to a place’s form, feel and function and can make a significant contribution to a place’s value - economically, culturally, socially and environmentally.

Urban design is both a process and an outcome. The process involves a collaboration of people, their areas of expertise and experience, the information available, including the context and the objectives of the process, which will help deliver the outcome. In respect to the outcome, urban design is concerned with the design quality of buildings, places, spaces and networks that make up towns and cities, and how people use them. It becomes particularly important at the interface between buildings/structures and spaces, and between public and private space.

The way in which the pieces of urban environment relate to each other is a key factor in the success or failure of how well a city or suburb functions for the people living in it. Urban design ranges in scale from the design and layout of the whole city, to the suburb, street and section design, or even to the architecture of the building and surrounding landscape. The importance of high quality urban design to the economic advancement of cities and towns is recognised internationally. It relates not only to attracting visitors, but also to providing an environment in which people want to live and do business. It’s about capturing the activity and vibrancy of a place that builds confidence and gives incentive to invest.

The Christchurch City Plan (the City Plan) recognises the importance of high quality urban design through objectives, policies, and methods, including urban design assessment matters, for some areas of the city, but to a limited extent only for other areas of the city, such as the suburban centres business zones. Both private plan changes and plan changes initiated by Council in recent years have provided a much stronger foundation for achieving high quality urban design, such as in new residential urban growth areas encompassed by the Living G zone, and for existing higher density residential zones, including the Living 3 and 4 zones (Plan Change 53).

However, for more than a decade there has been a significant level of concern, particularly more recently following the damage incurred by the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010/2011, that the city’s local and district centres have not, and will not, achieve the quality of environment that is anticipated by the wider community for these areas. In addition there is concern that the value added, particularly in benefits to business, (for developers, property owners, their tenants, and the community more broadly) from high quality design in the longer term will not be captured.

The matters of concern raised relate to: the generic quality of district and neighbourhood centres; the layout of developments and relationships to public space; a lack of human scale and comfort; the quality of the interface between public space and the private realm; accessibility; visual and physical impacts of vehicle access and parking; Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED); quality of architectural design; building construction and materials; environmentally sustainable design; overall amenity and; relationships with neighbouring developments in the wider context, amongst other matters. Perhaps the key matter of concern in the context of this work is the

relationship between public or publically accessible space and private development, which impacts upon all of the matters noted above.

These concerns have been raised by:

- Residents and other community stakeholders, including business associations, articulated via Community Boards and City Councillors and through various forums.
- The community more widely through processes such as the Suburban Centres Master Plans Programme and case management processes.
- Council staff, particularly regulatory and urban renewal planners and urban designers who deal with resource consents, including their more recent and extensive involvement in the redevelopment of the suburban centres following the Canterbury earthquakes.

Concerns were also raised about the urban design quality of developments within the Central City business zones, where there were limited urban design controls and similar design issues were being raised to those in the district and local centres. However the Central City design concerns were addressed through an alternative legislative process, the *Christchurch Central Recovery Plan*.

At present there are no urban design controls for the older, established Business 1 zones under the current City Plan and limited urban design controls in the Business 2 zones, with the controls related to larger developments or those within the Business 2P (parking) zone. Where there are controls they have been introduced to the City Plan by way of a Plan Change for a specific suburban centre, or in relation to an urban growth area, the latter being relatively inconsistent in approach and scope across the city.

Responding to these concerns, Council staff began exploring possible means of improving the quality of Business 1 and 2 zones, and more recently aspects of the Business 2 P zones. The exploration of various approaches was interrupted in part by the Canterbury earthquakes but continued in 2011 and 2012. The work focused on the results of the following consultation and engagement:

- Draft discussion paper (2008) outlining issues, options and potential changes to the City Plan in the Business 2 and Central City zones.
- Holding Council Planning Committee workshops to discuss urban design issues in the Business 1 and 2 zones (2011-2012).
- Public consultation exercises to ascertain the issues and preferred options to address them (2008-2012).
- *Summary of Consultation* from feedback received from three public/stakeholder consultation processes and from special interest groups (2009 and 2012).
- Urban Design Panel review of the proposed City Plan changes (2012).

As a result of this work a set of amendments to the City Plan has been proposed. In addition to this a number of non-regulatory methods are being pursued including:

- Case management provided by the Council, including urban design and planning advice, where redevelopment is proposed as a result of earthquake damage.
- Development of a generic business zone design guide with addendums for specific suburban centres.

- Suburban Centres Master Plans.
- Urban Design Panel review of Business 1 and 2 zone proposals.

Various pieces of work have already been undertaken by the Council in relation to design in the Business 1 and 2 zones, specifically:

- Site survey. The site survey involved the development of assessment criteria and subsequent review of more than 40 sites across B1 and B2 zones in Christchurch, through a combination of GIS desktop analysis and ground truthing;
- Best practice urban design review of New Zealand and international reports and documents;
- Test modelling and analysis of the proposed rules and potential amendments to Business 1 and 2 rules;
- Review of current urban design provisions relating to Business zones both within the Christchurch City Plan and from other local authority plans, particularly from those located within Canterbury.

Previously work was also undertaken in regard to transport related matters such as parking minimums and maximums in relation to the Central City Business 1 zone and other Central City business zones.

1.2 Scope of Work

The Plan Change focuses on improving developments' layout, quality and amenity, specifically in regard to the Plan provisions relating to matters of site context, urban design and amenity, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

The Plan Change does not address:

- Special provisions
- The location and extent of zone boundaries
- Height limits more generally
- Site density
- Separation from neighbours
- Town Centre zones under the Banks Peninsula District Plan
- Sunlight and outlook
- Driveway locations
- On-street customer parking areas

2.0 Statutory and Non-Statutory Context

The following is the statutory and non-statutory framework influencing this work.

	Statutory	Non-statutory
National		NZ Urban Design Protocol National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
Regional & sub regional	Canterbury Regional Policy Statement The Recovery Strategy [for Greater Christchurch]	Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy
City	Christchurch City Plan Christchurch Central Recovery Plan	Christchurch Suburban Centres Masterplans Christchurch Strategic Transport Plan

2.1 National Statutory Context and Guidance

2.1.1 Resource Management Act

The Section 32 report (S32 report) takes into consideration the broader definition of amenity outline in Section 5 of the Resource Management Act (RMA):

“Amenity values” means those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.

2.1.2 New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (NZ UDP 2005)

The Urban Design Protocol (the Protocol) is a non-statutory document but is widely recognised and accepted for the urban design qualities which it identifies. The Council is signatory to the Protocol, by which it commits to ‘create quality urban design through their own actions’.

The Protocol is a voluntary agreement between signatories, of which the Christchurch City Council is a signatory. It commits the signatories to specific urban design initiatives intended to raise the quality of urban design within their town or city.

The Protocol identifies seven essential, interrelated, design qualities:

- **Context:** seeing that buildings, places and spaces are part of the whole town or city
- **Character:** reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment
- **Choice:** ensuring diversity and choice for people
- **Connections:** enhancing how different networks link together for people

- **Creativity:** encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions
- **Custodianship:** ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy
- **Collaboration:** communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities

While non statutory, the Protocol provides a mandate for at least the consideration of high quality urban design. In conjunction with the Protocol, research was undertaken resulting in the publication of *The Value of Urban Design* (2006). The research showed conclusively that good urban design has the potential to create value for communities, individuals, the economy and the environment.

2.1.3 National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED 2005)

The National Guidelines for CPTED provides local authorities with a framework of strategies and tools to address crime prevention more holistically and for individual developments by focusing on reducing the opportunity to commit crime, therefore lessening the motivation to offend. CPTED reduces criminal opportunity and fosters positive social interaction among legitimate users of space.

There are four key overlapping CPTED principles which are: surveillance; access management; territorial reinforcement and; quality environments.

The CPTED principles and qualities are integral to achieving high quality urban design. Many of the matters identified as issues in the B1 and B2 zone research relate to the qualities of a safer place, as well as to the functional and aesthetic attributes of good urban design.

2.2 Regional Guidance and Legislation

2.2.1 The Recovery Strategy [for Greater Christchurch] (2012)

The Recovery Strategy is the key reference document that guides and coordinates programmes of work, including Recovery Plans, under the Christchurch Earthquake Recovery (CER) Act. It sets a shared vision and the Government's overall approach to recovery providing direction and overall coordination of decision making. Policies and plans, such as the Regional Policy Statement and Plans, cannot be interpreted or applied in a way that is inconsistent with The Recovery Strategy.

2.2.2 Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (2013), the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS 2007) and Proposed Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement

The operative Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (RPS 2013) must be given effect to by the Christchurch City Plan. It has one objective which (loosely) references urban design (*Objective 5.2.1*), which promotes development which is well designed, located and functions in a way that meets the social, economic, cultural, and health and safety needs of the community.

Proposed Plan Change 56 is consistent with Objective 5.2.1, expanding further on its intentions and providing greater clarity to the anticipated outcomes, in regard to suburban centres.

The UDS provides a framework for the growth, development and enhancement of the urban and rural areas of the Greater Christchurch sub region for the period to 2041.

Proposed Change 1 (Change 1) of the RPS, currently under appeal, provides the statutory policy direction and an implementation package to achieve the UDS. Objectives, policies and rules in district and city plans are the key means by which Change 1 is given effect. Change 1 is a statutory

document that the Christchurch City Council must have regard to when preparing or changing the City Plan.

Change 1 contains the following policies (paraphrased) that more specifically apply to achieving high quality urban design in the Business 1 and 2 zones in Christchurch, both in existing and new urban centres.

12A.4 Policies

Policy 5: Key Activity Centres and Commercial Activities

This policy identifies the Key Activity Centres (KACs) within Greater Christchurch, many of which incorporate the Christchurch City Plan Business 2 zone. Any changes to this zone should not be made without having regard to Change 1. In addition to requirements to manage the development of KAC's with respect to matters such as the provision of facilities, the mix of activities, support and provision of multimodal transport etc, the policy also identifies the need to take into account a number of design related matters if expansion of a KAC is proposed.

Policy 7: Development Form and Design

Greenfields development, intensification, and the development of Key Activity Centres should give effect to urban design best practice. The principles of the NZ Urban Design Protocol (Ministry for the Environment, 2005) shall be observed when preparing or assessing any urban development. In addition, the policy further identifies a range of urban design matters to be addressed through urban development.

As with the RPS 2013, Plan Change 56 is well aligned with and provides greater detail to, the policies of Plan Change 1.

2.3 District Legislation, Non Statutory Plans and Tools

2.3.1 Christchurch City Plan

The Business 1 and 2 zones (including the B2P zones) are under the territorial authority of Christchurch City Council and the Operative Christchurch City Plan (the Plan). The Plan seeks to provide for a distribution and diversity of business environments, providing for the consolidation or expansion of existing district and local centres that meet the needs of the wider community, as well as provide for new centres in urban growth areas.

The Plan currently lacks a specific objectives and policies framework in regard to urban design. Rather it broadly references city form, urban consolidation, building design and appearance, amenity and character, amongst other matters.

At present, the City Plan is highly enabling with respect to the established Business 1 and 2 zones (as opposed to the urban growth area centres noted below). Resource consent is generally not required for development within the Business 1 and 2 zones, with the exception of transport related matters.

However, both private plan changes and plan changes initiated by Council in recent years have provided a much stronger foundation for achieving high quality urban design in new urban growth areas and existing higher density residential zones, including the Living 3 and 4 zones. These include specific policies, new rules (both quantitative and qualitative) and accompanying urban design principles and assessment matters to better define good urban design outcomes and measures. The

rule activity status for the qualitative urban design assessment has tended to be restricted discretionary activity status. This allows for greater discussion and assessment of design matters.

The design of developments in Business 1 and 2 zones, where resource consent is not required, is currently handled by non-statutory measures such as pre-application meetings, through case management in the case of earthquake affected centres, and more recently, in conjunction with the Suburban Centres Master Plans. Design guides for specific suburban centres are also being prepared to accompany and reinforce design matters.

2.3.2 Christchurch Suburban Centres Masterplans

The Suburban Centres Programme is a Council initiated and, in one case community initiated, master planning initiative for suburban commercial centres, which include Business 1 and 2 and town centre zones. It is focused on those centres which experienced a high degree of earthquake damage and were recognised as in need of a high degree of public and private sector assistance to rebuild. At the time of writing eight suburban masterplans were at various stages of development, with four adopted and the remainder having been through at least one community consultation phase. The masterplan areas include:

- Lyttleton
- Sydenham
- Linwood Village
- Selwyn Street Shops
- Sumner Village Centre
- Ferry Road Stage 1 (incorporating Woolston and Ferrymead)
- Edgware Village
- New Brighton

What has come out to date very strongly from the community consultation, in all except one of the master plan areas, is the desire for site and building redevelopment that:

- is resilient and flexible
- recognises the character of the centre
- is of a high quality design
- ensures that buildings are built right up to the street, and car parking does not dominate the site
- protects the remaining built character that contributes positively to the centre.

2.3.3 Christchurch Urban Design Panel

The Christchurch Urban Design Panel is an independent, non statutory design review panel for urban design proposals both pre and post resource consent lodgement. The Panel has to a degree influenced better urban design outcomes, particularly where proposals come in at a pre application stage and/or recommendations made by the Panel are supported by urban design provisions in the City Plan. The assessment matters provided as part of Plan Change 53 (Living 3 & 4 zones) have

ensured that the Urban Design Panel have a very clear set of matters which they can relate their recommendations to for the benefit of the Applicant and the Council.

2.3.4 Pre Application Advice

The Christchurch City Council provides a pre application advice service through which urban design advice is offered free of charge to encourage Applicants to discuss their proposals prior to lodgement. This has been found to be quite a successful approach generally in respect to gaining better design outcomes.

3.0 Zone Context

The geographical locations of the Business 1 and 2 zones are illustrated in Appendix A.

A clear pattern of redevelopment and consolidation (expansion of floor area) within existing sites within the Business 1, 2 and 2P zones is emerging following the 2010/2011 earthquakes, with the exception of some of the city's eastern suburban centres. In suburban areas, many of the B1 zones have played an important role in the legibility of the local area by way of location, visibility, the activity (or 'use') and the built form. To ensure that this local identity is continued as an integral element of the community, the contribution of any new building to achieving this in the context of the specific area is vital.

In addition the B2 zones, with pressure for expansion as a result of the loss of much of the City Centre commercial area, are playing a far greater and more varied role in community life than previously.

Business 1 (Local Centre/District Centre Fringe) Zone

This zone consists of approximately one hundred small local commercial areas in the city, generally located within suburban living areas, and also acting as a buffer with neighbouring residential activity to the district centres. The Business 1 zones generally have a more localised area of influence due to their limited range of goods and activities and more emphasis on pedestrian or localised transport access.

In addition, within the Living G (Greenfield) Zones, there are areas identified that are allocated for Business 1 activities to allow for small scale neighbourhood centres, to which the Business 1 zone rules apply. These areas are largely around the periphery of the City in largely yet to be developed subdivisions.

Business 2 (District centre core) Zones

There are currently twenty eight Business 2 (District centre core) Zones, located throughout the city. Generally they are fairly evenly distributed across the city, partly as a result of the broad hierarchy of centres provided in the City's policies. The district centres provide for a wide range of goods and services and are highly accessible with respect to transport options. Many of the larger suburban centres serve as focal points for co-location of community services and facilities and for social interaction; several also serve as consolidation focal points for residential intensification. In addition to neighbouring residential zones, they also often border Business 4 (suburban industrial) zones.

Business 2P (Business parking) Zone

This is a specialist zone associated with district suburban centres. As well as ensuring parking provision, the zone provides for an amenity buffer between the commercial activity and adjoining residential areas.

Key Activity Centres

Proposed Change 1 identifies Key Activity Centres (KAC's) in Christchurch. These centres encompass Business 1 and 2 zones, including the City's malls, and are relatively evenly distributed forming an

inner and outer ring of KAC's around the Central City. Most of the KAC's are predominantly zoned Business 2, with an adjunct of smaller Business 1 zones generally incorporating strip shopping. Following the Canterbury earthquakes, there has been increasing pressure to rebuild and consolidate activity in and around these centres, primarily for additional commercial and retail activity, while the Central City is unavailable.

The balance of Business 1 and Business 2 zones are relatively evenly dispersed across the City and differ significantly in the area covered and the plot sizes within them, from a single plot to larger centres such as Sydenham.

4.0 Assessment Methodology

The Urban Design Technical Report 2012 (Appendix B) considered a range of urban design, appearance and amenity issues, which were assessed within the context of the local and district commercial centres. To establish the range of urban design related issues in the Business 1 and 2 zones, and the possible responses, the report drew on:

- The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and the qualities contained in its 7 C's;
- A literature review of relevant planning documents, urban design best practice guidance, and urban research from New Zealand and overseas;
- Urban Design Issues and Options Study (2008)¹, Urban Design Issues and Options for the Central City Business Zones and Business 2 Zones (2009) including: GIS desktop analysis; site survey assessments; and 3D computer modelling based on representative sites in the zones.
- Urban Design Technical Report, Plan Change 56 – Results and Recommendations (2011), including site survey assessments of Business 1 and 2 zones based on representative sites.

Assessment criteria were informed and developed through the literature and best practice review (Appendix C and D), from which a final 36 sites were chosen for assessment and modelling. Of the 36 sites, 25 were located in the B1 zone, 9 in the B2 zone and 2 in the B2P zone. These sites were representative of the very broad range of development typologies located within these zones. They ranged from large scale retail malls to mid sized car based development typologies, through to small scale street based convenience retail units. The survey results identified a wide range of issues across most of the development typologies.

The Urban Design Technical Report (Appendix B) also included an issues and options analysis which considered a range of potential techniques/tools to address the urban design issues raised, including:

- Retention of the status quo
- City Plan changes (with alternative options)
- Urban Design Panel review
- Provision of non statutory guidance

In addition incentives for better development were also considered as an option. However in respect to the cost-benefit analysis, particularly from a local authority perspective, they were not considered as favourably as the alternative options. The proposed options above, bar the status quo, could all address the design issues but to varying degrees depending upon specificity, level of discussion engaged in and a range of other factors. The proposed approach outlined in this report allows design flexibility, while achieving a better and more collaborative design outcome.

¹ These studies were undertaken in relation to the Central City Business Zones and the Business 2 Zones. They did not include the Business 1 Zone. For the purpose of this report, the Central City issues and outcomes are excluded, with only the Business 2 matters identified.

5.0 Review of Urban Design Issues

The review and response to each urban design issue identified is structured in the following way:

- **Explanation of the Urban Design Matter:** this introduces the urban design issue and identifies any potential adverse effects that may result if it is not avoided, mitigated or remedied.
- **Review of Recent Development:** this summarises the current statistical evidence where available and survey results of on-site observations from existing development. The survey accompanies this report and identifies the key urban design criteria and the extent to which they have occurred (Appendix C). The assessment categorises developments as: low; low-moderate; moderate; moderate-high; and high, on the basis of how well the development met the design criteria.
- **Urban Design Best Practice:** this considers the findings of the literature review and interprets them in the context of the Business 1 and 2 zones.
- **Current City Plan Provisions:** This outlines existing City Plan provisions relating to the urban design issue in the Business 1 and 2 zones
- **Recommended Plan Change Approach:** this collates the findings of the first four sections and considers how the proposed Plan Change can respond to the issues raised through objectives, policies, rules and/or assessment matters and what differentiation, if any, should occur between the Business 1 and 2 zones. Where assessment matters are deemed appropriate the possible wording for these has been included. This section considers public, neighbour and resident perspectives.

It is important to note that some of the issues raised can be quite technical and subtle, for example, safety and visual interaction. These are not just based on simple visual aesthetics but also consider other important ingredients for creating successful places for people. These often need to work as a complete package, as emphasised through the discussion of urban design in the background section of this report.

Within the *Recommended Plan Change Approach* section, the recommendation of rules and/or assessment matters is dependent on a number of factors. Currently most recent developments are derived by rule-based (quantitative rules) development controls. However an alternative or complementary approach is to employ an assessment-based process (a more qualitative focus) to improve the design of development, in conjunction with non-statutory methods to provide further guidance.

The recommended plan change approach, for the Business 1 and 2 zones, places emphasis on the use of assessment matters rather than the extensive use of quantitative rules. This is intended to provide for a level of certainty while ensuring that key urban design matters are considered and addressed. This in part is to recognise the very broad range of development typologies, including differing scales, types of activities and locations, within these zones. A restricted discretionary activity status and baseline rules are recommended to be utilised as triggers to ensure a minimum standard of development is achieved, as compared to a controlled activity status. Restricted activity status allows an application to be declined if the proposal does not meet the intended urban design outcome, which a controlled activity status does not. In addition, restricted discretionary activity status enables a design conversation to take place, supporting the assessment approach.

Also in regard to the *Recommended Plan Change Approach* section, there are quite a number of urban design responses or assessment matters which overlap. This is a result of the integrated nature of urban design issues and their impacts. Therefore, the same considerations are often relevant to a number of issues. The report has sought to provide a comprehensive coverage of each issue, which results in the overlap.

5.1 Site Layout, Appearance and Amenity

Urban design, as discussed in the definition earlier in this report, is a wide ranging terminology that encompasses both a process and design outcomes related to the urban environment. Urban design incorporates a bundle of design matters, encompassing the overall site and building layout of developments, that all together address urban quality. Urban design quality depends on the manner in which the various design elements come together and reinforce each other, recognising the context in which a development is proposed.

Development which is appropriate to and adds value to the context is a key defining factor in achieving good urban design. Context encompasses the physical and non physical attributes that influence the development. These range from the physical location and its associated attributes, including climatic conditions and topology, to existing scale of development, right through to the social structure of the locale, and community perceptions resulting from this. A development considered an urban design success in one context may be inappropriate and poorly received in another. This may be because the factors defining one context are completely different to the other, and therefore the balance of attributes and the way in which they are constructed should be varied accordingly.

Urban design often has competing design objectives, and compromises may have to be made between issues to achieve a better overall balance of development outcomes. Issues such as the quantity and location of on-site car parking required may directly compete with high quality urban design outcomes. However the latter may be less measurable in quantitative terms, yet far more important in relation to the viability and success of the centre.

Therefore an assessment based approach is considered better than a “one size fits all” rules approach that does not capture the nuances of place and scale.

5.1.1 Explanation of Urban Design Matters

This section takes a holistic view of urban design and the use of the term to encompass the wide range of design aspects covered and the need for a strong policy framework to support the balancing act that is urban design. This relates to not only built form, but more widely relationships with the surrounding environment, site layout, connectivity, access and supporting infrastructure such as car parking.

One of the key issues in relation to urban design has been the reductionist view of design within the City Plan, and consequently throughout the development process, whereby urban design is separated into individual design elements, such as appearance and amenity, rather than being assessed as a cumulative whole to include matters such as safety, security and the economic resilience of centres. The effects of poor quality urban design will be discussed in specific detail through the subsequent sections of this report but generally they relate to the potential for:

- The generic quality and ‘anywheresville’ identity of district and neighbourhood centres, with little reflection of the historic grain, pattern of development and local character.
- Lack of recognition of human scale and comfort.
- Poor quality interface between public space and the private realm.
- Lack of vitality and diversity of activities.
- Poor accessibility (poor quality, or lack of linkages and loss of opportunity for walking and cycling) both into developments and opportunities for through-block linkages where appropriate.
- Adverse visual and physical impacts of vehicle access and parking.
- Lack of recognition of principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in site layout and building design.
- Lack of recognition of relationships with neighbouring developments, including scale, site design, connectivity, grain and architectural detailing.
- Lack of recognition of environmentally sustainable design in the site and building design.
- The scale, colour and extent of signage and branding related to large format retailing.

In addition to specific urban design issues identified, another issue was acknowledged through the background research, survey work and consultation that was not a physical impact as such. This was rather the terminology surrounding urban design that in some cases resulted in a lack of comprehension or a misunderstanding as to the intent of a specific term.

5.1.2 Review of Existing Development

The review of existing practice emphasised the general lack of development that rated in the ‘high’ category for all the urban design criteria, with the exception of some of the streetscape and streetscene. This recognises that a balance of design elements and influences has not been fully achieved, and this applies across all the types of development surveyed. This in particular related to the character and heritage criteria, which will be discussed in more detail later in this report. The high rating in streetscape and streetscene reinforced the importance of Council’s involvement in public realm improvements to enhance the interface with the private realm and attract long-term investment in centres, as a non-statutory method of achieving high quality urban design.

A clear example of the reductionist approach, discussed earlier, was found in the design of many of the mall developments in the Business 2 zones in Christchurch, where large blank facades in close proximity to the street have been visually mitigated through high levels of landscaping. While the landscape may alleviate and soften the façade, it does little to ensure street surveillance and the safety of pedestrians using the area, or ensure a strong interface with the community, another important aspect of the urban environment. This has resulted in developments that have not reached an appropriate balance of good design qualities in responding to the challenges of their context. As such the importance of the interrelationships between design elements becomes lost or less recognised. This has not only environmental and social consequences but economic impacts as well. The large format malls and retail stores were over represented in the low to low-moderate

categories across the range of criteria, although there were some assessed in the higher categories demonstrating that it is possible to achieve better outcomes for this typology of development.

The weight or balance given to the various urban design elements in practice currently varies greatly between the Business 1 and 2 zones, and between developments within each of these zones. This is primarily because of the difference in development scale and the context of the developments. Each has a range of influences. For example from the development's location with the city and relationship to the transport network, the historic subdivision patterns in the area, including lot size, and the scale of the development in terms of floor area and height, or their proximity to adjoining development.

5.1.3 Urban Design Best Practice

Urban design terminology and practice were engendered to recognise the interrelationships between design disciplines, between principles, areas (i.e. centres and their residential hinterland), and elements, which produce high quality urban environment outcomes. Of particular importance throughout this process is the relevance of context in terms of the policy framework, the economic and social parameters and the physical location and its attributes.

What has been derived from the review of international and local best practice is the need to fundamentally establish a policy framework, both statutory and non-statutory, that provides the basis to recognise the complexity and interrelationships of urban design, and how to manage these effectively, and comprehensively. In addition best practice provides a balance between set standards and qualitative matters i.e. road widths versus street quality, with the balance of standards versus quality dependent upon the context.

The success of the urban design outcome is highly reliant on ensuring that through the urban design process the appropriate level of contextual information is accessed, recognised and utilised. Context and site analysis are tools that are essential to the development process, particularly for larger more comprehensive sites, but have not necessarily been recognised as such and in such a way that information gaps are not adequately recognised. Context and site analysis are now commonly used at the initiation stages of most design processes, in New Zealand and in many parts of the world. They ensure that a full understanding of the site, its surrounds and influences upon it are identified, assessed and potentially addressed in the development of a proposal. The level of information required for these is related to both the scale and complexity of a site. This can differ substantially from site to site, particularly in existing urban environments where there is a high degree of variability in the importance of the various influences on a site, i.e. existing heritage buildings, hierarchy of streets, climatic conditions etc.

It is however, not only the information that is important to the development of a proposal but the development of the thought process - the rationale, that results in the design outcome. The rationale provides the pieces of the puzzle, much like a jigsaw, that gives substance to the integrity of the final design. As such a design statement in conjunction with a site and context analysis provides the ability to understand the logic and process that has been worked through to establish an appropriate design response.

The statutory and non statutory context outlined in Section 2.0 of this report, establishes the New Zealand framework and the hierarchy for good design which the City Plan should not be inconsistent with.

5.1.4 Recommended Plan Change Approach

An amendment to the suburban centres **objective (12.8)** to directly reference urban design is needed to reinforce the important contribution good urban design can offer Business 1, 2 and 2P zones. This objective should be worded as below (or similar), with changes to the current objective shown as tracked:

Urban design, appearance and amenity, ~~design and effects of~~ in suburban centres: To achieve Aa high ~~standard~~ quality of urban design, appearance, ~~design~~, amenity, design and layout in suburban centres, whilst minimising adverse effects resulting from their development and activities.

To further support this objective and highlight the importance and value of urban design, as well as clarify commonly used urban design terminology and its intent, it is recommended that the **explanations and reasons** throughout the proposed plan change be expanded to more fully address this.

It is also recommended that a **restricted discretionary activity** status apply to urban design appearance and amenity in the Business 1 and 2 zones to provide both some certainty for developers as to the breadth of matters to be addressed, while ensuring the opportunity for a robust design discussion and assessment.

It is also recommended that additional policies and rules, including amendments to existing rules, and assessment matters are incorporated to support the suburban centres objective. These are outlined in more detail in following sections of this report.

In addition, it is recommended that a **context and site analysis, and design statement** be prepared for all Business 1 and 2 for all sites over 1000m², with the level of information provided dependent upon the location, size and complexity of the development site, including:

- the identification of key routes for vehicle, cycle and pedestrian movement;
- the location of key entrances, activity generators and transport infrastructure such as car parking areas and bus stops;
- identification of the existing built and natural environment and important future public and private interfaces and spaces; and
- identification of climatic considerations, amongst other influences.

5.2 Connectivity and Access

The issue of connectivity and access relates to the following matters:

- Pedestrian/cycle connectivity and access into buildings and developments.
- Pedestrian circulation and permeability.
- Barrier free access to and around sites and buildings.
- Pedestrian safety and comfort along streets and public spaces.
- Vehicle movement to and through sites.
- On-site cycle facilities.

5.2.1 Explanation of Urban Design Matters

This section addresses the quality of multi modal transport connections and access to and through spaces, sites and buildings, with an emphasis on pedestrian and cycle connections which have, in recent decades, been given less consideration than vehicle movement in many of the suburban centres. Some of the potential adverse effects of poor provision and quality of multi modal connections include:

- Lack of safe, direct, comfortable pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities.
- Loss of environmental benefits i.e. less emphasis on alternatives to private vehicle use such as walking, cycling and public transport, particularly for households without access to a car.
- Undermining of traditional main street commercial centres, lack of vitality and social interaction from less foot trade and use of a local centre, particularly in regard to neighbourhood centres as opposed to malls.
- Public health issues including obesity.
- Marginalisation of particular sectors of society, such as people who are elderly or disabled.
- Increased incidences of vandalism and property crime.

5.2.2 Review of Existing Development

The review of existing development was most pertinent to the car-oriented development typologies in relation to pedestrian circulation between the street, car park and building entrances. In the pedestrian oriented streets, such as the traditional main streets of Sydenham and Merivale, pedestrian access and movement overlap to a greater extent with other matters such as active street frontages and the diversity of land uses, than currently is the case in many of the mall type developments such as Northlands.

The review of existing development combined the topics of circulation and permeability. However circulation is more generally about the ease of movement, while permeability refers to the development grain, i.e. the size of blocks and therefore opportunity/distances to travel for access. Generally development was weighted evenly between low-moderate, moderate-high and high, with the peak at moderate. A relatively small proportion of developments achieved a low score for permeability and circulation, meaning they did not define pedestrian routes through the site, with pedestrian access through car parking areas being of a particularly poor quality.

The more traditional main streets with frontages directly onto the street generally scored in the higher categories, while the typically larger, car oriented development typologies such as the large format retail sites including supermarkets, scored lower, with vehicles being dominant over pedestrians and cyclists. But within the latter, there were examples of development which had achieved good pedestrian circulation and access. A key observation was the high level of adverse impact of vehicle crossings in and out of sites on the safety and comfort of users, both with respect to main street environments and in relation to larger scale development.

Generally it was observed that disabled access was of a reasonable quality (most likely resulting from building code requirements) and reasonably well integrated with general pedestrian circulation. The majority of developments were categorised in the moderate to moderate-high categories, with some compromises in regard to access. However, there remain some developments

in the low and low-moderate range, with issues including width of footpaths, obstacles, and circuitous routes to building access.

Pedestrian safety and comfort relates to matters usually discussed within the context of CPTED, but are the result of more wide reaching design responses, and relate to actual safety as well as to the perception of safety. This includes matters such as passive surveillance, clear sightlines and choices of pedestrian routes, demarcation between public and private space and the level of amenity of the environment. Pedestrian comfort responds more to the needs of the user with respect to the addressing the climatic conditions as well as the ability to use the pedestrian environment without impediment. The scoring for this criterion fell mostly into the moderate to moderate-high category, neither particularly a good development response nor a particularly bad one.

Overall issues observed in existing private development included:

- the lack of routes between key destinations that follow pedestrian desire lines i.e. more direct, well-overlooked and identified pedestrian routes;
- the scale of the development blocks increasing overall walking distance; the poor quality of the pedestrian environment both physically and visually;
- the lack of perceived personal safety and security; and
- vehicle access impeding pedestrian safety and flow as a result of the number and location of vehicle access points.

The review of existing development also addressed the quality of outdoor publically accessible space within sites, such as plazas or landscaped amenity areas, although there were relatively few of these areas across the Business 1 and 2 zones. The scores for these were very evenly distributed with poor and good examples. These ranged from having no publically accessible space available in conjunction with large developments, to providing high quality seating areas in safe and accessible locations i.e. provision for rest, gathering and social interaction, and visual improvements of pedestrian routes that reduce the perceived walking times in larger blocks.

A selection of existing Christchurch developments illustrated below shows the variability in provision of transport facilities and associated safety, except for private vehicle use, particularly in regard to larger scale Business 2 zone development.



No demarcation of pedestrian access or space within the car park or adjacent to the building. Additionally, signage on the public footpath creating hazards for users.



Compromised visibility of pedestrians for drivers exiting the parking building. Poor amenity for pedestrians resulting from the design of the ramp structure and building users.



Good quality pedestrian interface and facilities to a highly visible entrance way, and direct pedestrian crossing to the building from the car park.



Continuous pedestrian access clearly demarcated from car parking and with some overlooking from adjacent buildings.



Cycle parking Incorporated within the site in a clearly visible and accessible location

5.2.3 Urban Design Best Practice

Quality connections and access are about ensuring that there is a strong correlation between the quality and location of buildings and spaces within commercial centres, and how they relate to associated public and private movement networks and access. There are significant potential adverse effects of not ensuring that pedestrian and cycle access is convenient, attractive, accessible, safe and comfortable to use, as well as integrating this with vehicle access and facilities. The focus for how this is achieved, whether it is public or private space, may differ between the larger scale, more inward looking sites of the Business 2 zones and the smaller scale, street based developments of the B1 zone.

Influencing the choice of travel mode is a basic tenet of achieving high quality urban centres. The number and concentration of pedestrians, whether they have travelled to the centre on foot, by car or another mode, provides positive benefits critical to the social and economic viability and vitality of commercial centres.

International and national best practice is to both offer and support modal choice through a range of mechanisms from providing transport infrastructure, such as bus shelters and cycle parks, to the development of environments which encourage people to walk, cycle or take the bus, i.e. higher quality environments, visually and functionally. The recently released draft Christchurch Transport Strategic Plan (2012) takes a strategic approach to achieving this balance, supported by an action plan to address the quality of the transport environment, for each modal choice. In achieving a modal choice, access and the quality of the pedestrian environment are critical.

Particularly with respect to the larger Business 2 zone developments, the layout of buildings on the site should be straight forward and facilitate a choice of routes, as appropriate to the context, which relate to the key desire lines. Clear and direct pedestrian movement routes, with good sightlines, to and from key entrances are important. Ensuring that the routes feel and are safe, are wide and clear from obstructions, avoid undue conflicts with vehicular traffic and are well overlooked for personal security, improves the overall usability and comfort for pedestrians. In addition, the visibility of entrances and provision of shelter for pedestrians further supports pedestrian safety, amenity and potential for increased use.

Overall it is important to respond to the needs and capabilities of all users of the site and the centre, recognising that a balance in transport choice should be achieved. Urban design is about carefully integrating land use and movement networks, prioritising pedestrian access where possible, lessening the impacts and dominance of vehicle movement and car parking.

5.2.4 Recommended Plan Change Approach

There is a significant amount of overlap in the urban design principles that achieve quality connections, access and publically accessible space. While there are urban design principles included in the policy section of the City Plan that address these matters to a degree, they do not necessarily address them in a more holistic approach, recognising the overlap between principles, and the outcomes. Therefore additional principles and amendments to existing principles are recommended for incorporation into City Plan urban design **policy**, which both fully or partially addresses connectivity and access, and are:

- Developments should achieve a high standard of design in the external appearance of buildings in suburban centres.
- Developments should achieve a high standard of design in the site and building layout and access in suburban centres.
- Developments in suburban centres should be designed in accordance with good urban design principles, and to promote the application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in suburban centres, including but not limited to, those noted below:
 - Development which responds positively to the existing context and character of the site, suburban centre and wider surrounding area;
 - Buildings that are oriented towards and address the street and other public spaces through the level of glazing, the architectural quality and detailing, and the frequency, location and legibility of entrances;
 - Development which provides for good connectivity and comfortable, safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles across the site and along adjoining streets;
 - Development that is not dominated by vehicle access, car parking and loading areas, particularly when viewed from the street or other public spaces;

In addition rules within the Business 1 and 2 zones that relate to the interface between buildings and the street/pedestrian routes to improve passive surveillance and the quality of the interface, as well

as highlight entrances and provide shelter for pedestrians, would support pedestrian amenity and safety.

Additional urban design **assessment matters** recommended for inclusion in the City Plan that either fully or partially address access and connectivity are:

- The location and layout of buildings and activities within the site should provide for an active interface with the street or publically accessible space, and provide for public use and convenience.
- Building design and site layout should respond to the nature of adjoining streets, the hierarchy of streets adjoining the centre, public transport routes, open space areas, and the accessibility of any public facilities such as crèches, libraries and public conveniences.
- Developments should provide for good connectivity and the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles within a site and along adjoining streets.
- Developments should contribute to the safety and security of centres, particularly at night, including the extent to which the building, layout or use of the site has been designed to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, including encouraging surveillance, effective lighting, management of public areas and boundary demarcation.
- The quality of buildings should contribute and respond positively to the street and open spaces, provide human scale and visual interest appropriate to the character and context of the site, adjacent buildings, and the surrounding environment.
- Developments should incorporate effective landscaping or other means to provide for increased amenity, shade, weather protection and screening of car parking areas and buildings from adjoining residences.
- The buildings' main entrances, openings and display windows should face the street, and maintain visual and physical connections between building interiors and public spaces.
- Developments should be designed to minimise the number of service and vehicle access ways from the street and to reinforce pedestrian priority along the footpath and within the site.

5.3 Vehicle Access and Parking

The issue of car parking and access relates to the following matters:

- The location of off-street car parking.
- Location and number of site access points.
- Landscaping and environmental quality of car parking areas.
- Visual dominance and impacts of car parking.

5.3.1 Explanation of Urban Design Matters

This section addresses the location of on-site car parking, parking buildings, the number of car parks required, vehicle and pedestrian access to and through sites and the associated landscape and amenity.

Some of the potential adverse effects of car parking and access include:

- Car parking areas and buildings visually and physically dominating the street frontage.
- Reduction in street-side life and activity.
- Compromised pedestrian connectivity along streets from multiple driveways over the footpath.
- Erosion in the quality and character of the interface with the street and suburban centre overall.
- Poor spatial definition of the street.
- The creation of heat islands and impacts of stormwater runoff from the expanses of paving.
- The perception created that centres are vehicle oriented and not safe for pedestrians and cyclists, and do not encourage people to consider alternatives to vehicle use to access their neighbourhood centre.
- Minimum car park number requirements which reduce the developable floor area and reduce the visual and physical quality of the area.

5.3.2 Review of Existing Development

It is acknowledged that, particularly in the Business 1 zones, the minimum car parking requirements of the City Plan have led to difficulties in the provision and location of on-site car parking, given the high number of car parks required for commercial activities in comparison to site area. The need for greater flexibility in this regard is a matter that should be addressed in conjunction with improved urban design outcomes.

The review criteria for car parking and access for car oriented typologies in suburban contexts, such as malls, placed emphasis on how buildings and car parks were laid out in relation to the neighbouring buildings and streets. In addition the quality of the landscaping as a mitigation tool was assessed. For pedestrian oriented areas, such as a traditional main street, the criteria for the review identified matters such as the level of street frontage continuity, the spatial definition of the street, pedestrian circulation and active frontages, and character. The number of car parks was not a

discussion matter of the review *per se*, but has been a constant issue in practice, particularly post earthquakes in relation to rebuilds. The requirement for minimum car park numbers in conjunction with developable area and impacts on the centres' amenity more widely, have been particularly prevalent in relation to the rebuilding of the more historic areas of Christchurch, such as Sydenham, where on-site car parking was not previously located and the site sizes (and dimensions) mean that it is very difficult to feasibly provide.

Typically the traditional pedestrian oriented mainstreet developments scored in the moderate to high category in regard to the location of car parking, such as blocks of Riccarton, where the car parking was primarily located to the side of or behind the buildings. However, given the extent of earthquake damage, many of the mainstreet sites are now very susceptible to redevelopment, for example full blocks at Sydenham. More recent site redevelopments have eroded mainstreet qualities of some of the smaller suburban centres by placing car parking on the street frontage, with the most significant issue considered to be the location of car parks on corner sites, for example the Beckenham shops redevelopment. This both detracts from the character and legibility of the area, as well as from the pedestrian oriented nature and functionality of the centres.

In a few suburban locations, such as parts of Riccarton Mall, it was considered that car parking on the street frontage, in combination with the building layout, and type and level of landscaping provided, contributed positively to the centre and the surrounding streetscape. Again the context and the balance of design elements appropriate to this context appear to be the key factors in the developments with high quality urban design outcomes.

However, many of the developments scored in the low-moderate and moderate categories. Overall, the results of the review indicated that there is an issue with: car parking located such that it visually dominates the street; the poor quality of the landscaping used to visually mitigate car parks and, particularly, adverse impacts resulting from vehicle access onto street frontages. In the larger scale suburban malls, car parking and access have particularly dominated where development has been undertaken in an *ad hoc* or staged approach and the overall site layout and traffic management of the site, in conjunction with the building layout, have not been comprehensively addressed.

Vehicle ramps to above-level car parking and access associated with this rated poorly overall in regard to their location and layout and interface with pedestrian movement and safety, as well as aesthetically.

The quality of landscaping across the sites with car parks was highly variable, with the scores evenly distributed across all of the categories. The developments ranged from having no landscaping in the car parking, to some planting (albeit poorly located or inappropriate due to the scale, maintenance or creation of CPTED issues), to highly effective large scale, well maintained planting.

As with the landscape criterion, the review of vehicle access applied to a smaller sample size than to other criterion because it was not applicable to sites without car parks. As such it related to the mainly car oriented typologies, which scored predominantly in the low-moderate to moderate categories. Vehicle access, particularly multiple and wide access, was found to compromise pedestrian safety and movement to a degree, creating a barrier and reducing the level of comfort for the pedestrian users.

A selection of existing Christchurch car parking facilities and their impacts on both B1 and B2 zone suburban centres are illustrated below.



The bulk, scale and appearance of car parking facilities can be overly visually dominant on existing residential environments as well as impact on the safety of pedestrians.



The introduction of a range of techniques, including design, landscape quality and site placement, can reduce the visual impact of car parking facilities.



The number of car parks required and the extent of car parking areas can reduce the quality of the interface with the street, as well as the environment of the centre.



High quality landscaping around a B2P zone opposite a residential area reduces the visual impact of parking while still allowing for informal surveillance.



Rear car parks can significantly reduce the impact of car parking areas on the main street character, however they need to be well overlooked and accessible.



Low key car parks located to the side of the built form helps provide continuity to the street frontage while limiting the visual and physical impact of car parking on the street.

5.3.3 Urban Design Best Practice

Effective management of access and car parking areas, including flexibility in providing for car parking numbers, is central to creating high quality commercial centres, whether they be large or small scale, mainstreet or mall typologies. Achieving continuity of the street frontage and spatial definition of the street, supporting good pedestrian movement and street edge activity, is an important principle of urban design no matter what the development typology or context. This is strongly interrelated to CPTED and more generally the principles of good urban design.

Car parking minimums still continue to be the most prevalent means of addressing car parking in Christchurch including in the Business 1 and 2 zones. However elsewhere in New Zealand including Auckland, Hamilton and Rotorua, car parking minimums have been removed from District Plans in some business zones. The intention is to achieve better design outcomes, reduce oversupply of car parking and increase efficiency in land use, as well as encourage multimodal transport policies. A tool to support the removal of car parking minimums is the Integrated Transport Assessment (ITA), which takes a more flexible approach to parking and considers all modes of transport accessed or used within a centre. This approach is already being used to assess larger development proposals in Christchurch.

The character, amenity and aesthetic qualities of the Business 1 and 2 zones should be built upon rather than detracted from, through the careful allocation and positioning of car parks such that they do not visually or physically dominate the commercial centre. Rather if required, car parking

and access should be kept to a minimum both in terms of number of car parks and access points, and addressed as an integrated design element of the overall form of the site.

Car parks should be located to the side, if well framed by buildings on the street frontage, or to the rear of the development, acknowledging CPTED requirements. Alternatively they may be located within the confines of the built form, while ensuring that the design of the building provides an active edge to the street. The encouragement of rear lane or shared access in appropriate locations, particularly where development is located within a mainstreet typology, reduces areas of pedestrian/vehicle conflict and allows for better management of traffic movement overall.

For the mall typologies there are a number of ways in which car parking could be better managed and integrated to result in car parking and access which is less visually and physically dominant, but is still accessible to customers. Car parking infrastructure such as parking buildings, rooftop or basement parking can be well integrated within a large site. Ramps and access associated with these require careful management in conjunction with other needs of the site, such as pedestrian movement and the safety and security of the site. At-grade car parking that is visually subservient to the overall structure of the building, pedestrian access and landscaping on the site, can also be visually well integrated.

5.3.4 Recommended Plan Change Approach

Relevant sections of the existing City Plan policies where the amenity effects of car parking, access and landscaping are considered include:

- Off street parking and loading.
- Minimum car parking number requirements.
- Parking requirements.
- Landscaping.
- Streetscene.
- Building appearance.

In minimising the effects of car parking and access additional urban design principles are recommended for inclusion in the City Plan as **policies** that consider more comprehensively the impacts of car parking and access. They are:

- The development should achieve a high standard of design through the site layout, access and external appearance of buildings.
- Developments in suburban centres are designed in accordance with good urban design principles, and to promote the application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in suburban centres, including but not limited to, those noted below:
 - Development which responds positively to the existing context and character of the site, suburban centre and wider surrounding area;
 - Buildings that are oriented towards and address the street and other public spaces through the level of glazing, the design, and the frequency, location and legibility of entrances;

- Landmark development on corner sites which strengthens the urban form and legibility of the suburban centre and incorporates distinctive design treatments;
- Development which provides for good connectivity and comfortable, safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles within the site and along adjoining streets;
- Development should not be dominated by vehicle access, car parking and loading areas, particularly when viewed from the street or other public spaces;
- Development which provides a compatible mix of uses and activity appropriate to the location;
- Development that enhances the landscape quality of the city and encourages landscape design and planting which contributes to the character and amenity of the suburban centre;
- Development that encourages the minimisation of energy use and resource consumption and manages storm water run-off at source.

- Car parking numbers should be appropriate to the scale and nature of the activity within the centre, as well as be cognisant of the development context i.e. the grain and scale of development and its location within the block, and taking into account alternative forms of transport available.
- Car parking areas and vehicle accesses should be located to support the street scene and quality of public spaces in suburban centres through appropriate placement.

Streets and other public spaces (the interfaces) are the most sensitive parts of a development to the wider environment and have the most impact on the overall quality of the centre. The Business 1 and 2 zone rules require greater consideration of the frontage treatment, including the requirement that buildings are located at the street edge, limitations on private access onto main streets and the location of car parks. With respect to matters such as landscaping it is considered that the current City Plan landscape standards are sufficient, if they are fully applied.

To further support car parking provision in suburban centres that recognises the specific context and influences on a centre, an additional City Plan **rule** is recommended that considers more comprehensively the impacts of car parking numbers, as well as the transport environment more holistically. It is:

- Removal of minimum car park numbers required and replacement with an Integrated Transport Assessment (ITA).

Additional urban design **assessment matters** that are recommended for inclusion in the City Plan that either partially or fully address car parking and access are:

- The use, location and layout of buildings and activities within the site should provide for an active interface with the street or publically accessible open space, and provide for public use and convenience.
- Developments should provide for good connectivity and the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles within a site and along adjoining streets.

- Developments should contribute to the safety and security of centres, particularly at night, including the extent to which the building, layout or use of the site has been designed to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, including encouraging surveillance, effective lighting, management of public areas and boundary demarcation.
- The quality of the site layout and building should contribute and respond positively to the street and open spaces, provide human scale and visual interest appropriate to the character and context of the site, adjacent buildings, and the surrounding environment.
- Developments should incorporate effective landscaping or other means to provide for increased amenity, shade, weather protection and screening of car parking areas and buildings, and utility areas.
- The building or use of the site should recognise and reinforce the context of the site, having regard to the scale and character of the surrounding environment.
- Car parking buildings or parking areas and their access points should not dominate the development, particularly as viewed from the street or neighbouring sites.
- Developments should be designed to minimise the number of service and vehicle access ways from the street and to reinforce pedestrian priority along the footpath and within the site.
- Developments on corner sites should emphasise the street corner and provide landmark building qualities through the layout, form and architectural detailing of the development.

5.4 Building Design and Appearance

The issue of building design and appearance relates to:

- Façade articulation and diversity.
- Material use, quality and application (composition).
- Building character, identity and contribution to the street and/or public area.
- Colour and signage.
- Building roofline.
- Environmentally sustainable design.

The amount of redevelopment required as a result of earthquake damage significantly elevates the importance of building design and appearance to the long term success of the suburban centres, particularly in respect to re-establishing Christchurch's sense of place and identity.

5.4.1 Explanation of Urban Design Matters

This section focuses on the perceived lack of quality of building design within both Business 1 and Business 2 zone developments. It considers that the combination of factors listed above that contribute to building design and appearance can be addressed through better design, in particular by providing a finer level of detail that recognises human scale, including the way in which people understand and respond to the development quality.

Some of the potential adverse effects from poor building design and appearance are:

- Large, monolithic building forms, including continuous rooflines, which are overbearing in relation to human scale and in poor contrast to the local established character and identity.
- Blank walls and generic façade designs that have little to visually stimulate and provide interest to the user, particularly pedestrian users of public space.
- Poorly articulated, forgettable or underwhelming corner buildings that do not contribute to way-finding or the character and legibility of the commercial centre, particularly in the context of the Christchurch street grid of the inner suburban areas.
- The use of poor quality materials and detailing that creates a lack of and/or sense of, stewardship of the development.
- Lack of recognition of the building function, including type of use and scale of activity.
- Lack of recognition of environmentally sustainable design.
- Loss of fined grained traditional commercial developments and lack of character elements incorporated into new developments that individually contribute to the overall cohesiveness and identity of the centre.
- Large scale corporate branding, signage and colours which are visually dominant within the streetscape or in relation to neighbouring areas.

5.4.2 Review of Existing Development

The review of existing development covered the criteria relating to building design and appearance noted earlier in this section. While some developments scored in the high and moderate-high categories for the five criteria, a similar proportion scored in the low and moderate-low categories for both the Business 1 and Business 2 zones. This indicates that there is an issue in regard to building design and appearance, but given that some developments have scored well, there is potential for new buildings to contribute more positively to the city.

Some examples of large format retail stores and shopping malls were assessed in the higher categories illustrating that positive outcomes can be achieved for this typology. However they were also over-represented in the lower categories, across all of the criteria. Issues represented included the scale and length of unbroken facades, large scale corporate branding visually dominating the context, lack of human scale elements, and the use of poor quality materials, amongst others.

Building character and identity was the lowest scoring criterion with no examples scoring in the high category in both the Business 1 and Business 2 zones. Results were weighted toward the moderate and moderate-high categories, but with a significant proportion also in the low and low-moderate categories. Buildings that fell into the low and low-moderate categories included large format retail and shopping malls, as well as some smaller buildings. The low scoring buildings had no distinctive identity or character elements, provided by the overall form of the building, style, and the type and level of detailing, consequently diluting Christchurch's sense of place.

Two storey buildings generally scored more highly in respect to articulation and diversity, and contained higher levels, or over 50% glazing, in combination with other elements such as balconies, changes in materials and recesses within the upper facade of the buildings.

A variety of developments that illustrate building design and appearance in the Business 1 and 2 zones are illustrated below.



A high level of building articulation across the facade length and height, regular entry points, human scale elements such as verandas and a high level of glazing at street level, creating a main street environment.

In contrast to the photo to the left, the two facades above provide very little in terms of human scale and interest, with the façade on the left adjacent to a highly utilised transport (and pedestrian route) and opposite a residential zone. Corporate branding is the only identification of the activity inside. Landscape treatments provide little further visual relief.



The photo to the left above illustrates both vertical and horizontal articulation and modulation in façade detail and roof form, as well as the positive visual impact of first floor glazing. In contrast the centre and right hand photo provide minimal modulation or articulation, the lack of human scale seen by the contrast of the woman seated to the right, in the right hand photo.



The photos above illustrate the contrast in the use of colour, signage, architectural articulation and modulation, albeit in differing contexts with the development to the left vehicle based development on an arterial route, and to the right a main street development, but also on a key arterial route.

5.4.3 Urban Design Best Practice

A building’s design and appearance contributes to the overall quality and character of a commercial centre at a range of scales, whether a single site zoned Business 1, a large scale mall development in the Business 2 zone, or somewhere in between. The challenge is to ensure and maintain a comfortable human environment and compatibility with existing development (where it is recognised as contributing positively to the area) at any scale, which contributes collectively to the

character and identity of that area. This is where a range of urban design techniques becomes important, particularly with respect to the larger developments, to reduce the perceived visual scale and provide architectural detailing that can contribute to the close relationship between the viewer/user and the building. A broad spectrum of people interact with commercial centre buildings on a daily basis unlike other suburban development, for example lower density residential developments.

Providing building modulation and articulation within the façade can be achieved through a range of techniques. Modulation of the basic building bulk relies on establishing breaks, either vertically or horizontally, in the façade and by providing changes in the roofline. These can include steps in plan, recesses or protrusions, setbacks in floor levels, through to full separation of building forms on the same site. Vertical modulation breaks up the façade across its length and needs to be of sufficient depth and width to visually separate lengths of the façade and avoid large expanses of exposed blank walls. This ultimately gives the appearance, primarily through shadow lines, that the building is divided up into smaller and more visually manageable forms that are not too overpowering in scale relative to neighbouring buildings.

While some consistency and coherence between development blocks can strengthen the character, it is unusual in the Christchurch context to have too much repetition of form, i.e. a whole block. A development form that was prevalent in Christchurch prior to the 2010/11 earthquakes, particularly in the older commercial centres, was the parade of shops. These buildings, while on very narrow individual titles (5-12m, with the average at about 6m) with party walls, were often developed comprehensively but with subtle changes in the articulation of the facades. The grain, i.e. the underlying subdivision pattern, still largely reflects this context. Individually the design (or poor design) of the smaller width street facades may have a much lesser impact than those with the wider frontages within these blocks, but collectively this may not be the case.

Horizontal modulation is effective in reducing the apparent height of buildings, providing a human scale and defining ground floor uses from those above, i.e. the mixed use scenario of retail on the ground floor and commercial office or residential use above. It can also help provide a visual or acoustic buffer between uses. The use of an upper storey setback or balcony enables the top storey of buildings to be more visually obscured from ground level, creating less of a contrast to adjacent buildings. This is less successful where deep set backs occur at ground level and buildings appear to overhang the site, and a direct relationship is lost between the building and street or public space. This affects the visual grounding of the building and repositions the visual bulk further up the building, making it appear top heavy. This approach to building modulation is inappropriate and more focus should be placed on modulating the upper portions of the building where necessary. However, this does not preclude smaller scale ground floor modulations such as inset windows and doors.

The same principles of vertical and horizontal modulation also apply to roof forms, particularly large parapets, which can carry through the impression of a large single building if not broken-down in a similar manner. This is more relevant as viewing distances increase and roof forms become more apparent on the skyline.

The use of variation in materials and colour and incorporation of glazing, awnings and verandas etc, contributes to building articulation and provides for greater legibility and recognition of entry points, changes in use and reduction of building mass. It also contributes to the variety, human interest and

scale of detailing of the building, and should closely relate to the established grain (the pattern and arrangement of subdivision/buildings on a site) of the development within the area. It is difficult to provide specific measures as to the level of modulation and articulation required or how that may be calculated. Both more functional elements of the building, such as glazing and balconies, can be used in conjunction with changes in material or colour, to provide a level of interest that relates well to human scale.

In addition to the other aspects of building design discussed, the degree to which the building contributes positively to achieve more sustainable outcomes is integral to adaptable and viable commercial centres. Aspects of building design such as greater floor to ceiling heights allow for more active utilisation of natural resources, for example greater light penetration into the building, and greater adaptability of the building for future use. Both rules and assessment matters may be applied to recognise the more, and less, tangible aspects of environmentally sustainable design.

Rules relating to continuous building length or that have a similar intent to visually and physically reduce building bulk, have been applied in various situations, including within the Christchurch City Plan. Consideration could be given to this type of approach where a high level of certainty of outcome is wanted, particularly where there is little or no opportunity for a wider urban design discussion. However this may not necessarily lead to a desirable outcome with respect to the design quality.

An assessment matter approach allows a higher degree of flexibility to achieve a desirable level of façade articulation and modulation. Within an assessment matter a rule of thumb approach may be applied to building façades that recognises that generally at the ground floor level, the balance is toward a more direct relationship between the internal activity of the building and the street, therefore glazing and access becomes more important and a more prominent feature of the building. At the upper levels where the human relationship is less direct, more emphasis can be placed on providing some diversity or interest across the façade that is legible but not necessarily highly detailed. Generally buildings that have provided a higher level of upper floor articulation, for example more than 60% articulation, are well liked and considered more attractive, with a good degree of human interest. Bland or featureless buildings generally contain a change across the façade of less than about 20% façade articulation, measure through aspects such as glazed area, or the quantum of material changes across the façade at each floor level.

The quality, permanence and use of local materials can convey pride in an area and contribute to a distinctive character. In addition the composition of building materials can increase the façade detail, providing greater richness and depth to the building, while articulating the building composition and functions, providing separation between lower and upper floors, indicating entry points and other features.

Reflecting the quality and type of material, as well as the colours, of the established character can also contribute to the character and identity of an area, so long as the new building is designed to complement existing development, rather than just copy it, ensuring it has greater architectural integrity. However it is insufficient to use material and colour in isolation of other methods to mitigate larger scale buildings or blank facades.

Colour should be applied in a manner that is in keeping with and does not overpower the architectural form and detailing of the building. The use of colour for branding, such as using one or

two bold colours across the whole of the building façade, can emphasise over-scale elements and detract from the human scale quality of the building and its neighbours, creating a visual bulk and dominance within the receiving environment and beyond, for example the visual impact of Mitre 10 Ferrymead on Charlesworth Reserve.

Signage can also be a highly influential factor in the perceived quality of the building, and in regard to the site design overall. Signage which is in keeping with the architectural form and detailing, i.e. is an integrated element within the overall design of the building, and which is in scale of the building and is not a dominant element within the receiving environment, can contribute to the legibility of the building, while maintaining a high level of urban quality.

Emphasis should be placed on finer quality ground level treatments where pedestrians will most closely encounter each building or development. Larger scale elements may be more appropriate on upper levels where they are viewed from a greater distance. Particularly in regard to Business 2 zones, visual interest is not restricted to elements on the buildings but also applies to open space elements such as landscape treatments, including fencing, paving and the use of planting.

The role of landscape in the overall softening of building bulk should not be relied on as a design approach or means of mitigation in its own right. Rather it can offset the dominance of the built environment at ground and first floor level levels where people move around, within or adjacent to the development.

In commercial centres landscaping should not be expected to dominate over buildings in privately owned space, with the exception of some Business 2 zone sites, as it would in residential areas. However, a balance should be struck where planting is still effective in softening edges, buffering activities from each other and reducing the impact of long facades, without compromising other good urban design qualities (e.g. community safety and social interaction) and the continuity of the retail strip/experience.

5.4.5 Recommended Plan Change Approach

Relevant sections of the existing City Plan policies and rules where the amenity effects of building design and appearance are considered include:

- External appearance of buildings.
- Visual amenity and external appearance.
- Streetscene.
- Building development and redevelopment.
- Signage.

Amendments and new inclusions to the existing suburban centres policies could reinforce building design and appearance in the Business section of the City Plan. A clear definition of the principles of good urban design, including Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, would accentuate the interface between building design and appearance and the other elements of design, discussed in more detail later in this report. Overall, the proposed amendments and additions to the policies are intended to facilitate higher quality design outcomes.

Recommended for inclusion in the **policy section** or similar wording are:

- That development is designed in accordance with good urban design principles, and promotes the application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in suburban centres, including those noted below:
 - Development which responds positively to the existing context and character of the site, suburban centre and wider surrounding area;
 - Development which maintains consistency with historical subdivision patterns relating to the rhythm of front façade widths and visual separation between buildings along the street or other public spaces;
 - Landmark development on corner sites which strengthens the urban form and legibility of the suburban centre and incorporates distinctive design treatments;
 - Buildings which avoid excessive perceived bulk or repetition and are of human scale, visually interesting, and use high quality materials; and
 - Development that encourages the minimisation of energy use and resource consumption and manages storm water run-off at source.

There are currently sections of the City Plan that apply to zones, other than the Business 1 and 2 zones, where the effects of building design and appearance are considered in some detail. Developing buildings which contribute positively to the overall character and design of a centre can involve both the overall form of the building and incorporating a variety of small scale structural elements, materials and colours. It is difficult to apply a standard, such as a rule, that will guarantee an appropriate level of application of these elements to achieve the desired outcome, and qualitative assessment is preferable. However a relatively simplistic measure may be applied as a baseline, with accompanying assessment matters, and non statutory methods such as design guidelines to further support the intent of the measure. Therefore additional **rules** in the Business 1 and 2 zones are proposed with regard to address:

- Level of glazing at the ground and upper floors
- Incorporation of verandas
- Façade articulation

Additional urban design **assessment matters** recommended for inclusion in the City Plan that either partially or fully address building design and appearance are:

- The use, location and layout of buildings and activities within the site should provide for an active interface with the street or publically accessible open space, and provide for public use and convenience.
- The building design quality should contribute and respond positively to the street and open spaces, provide human scale and visual interest appropriate to the character and context of the site, adjacent buildings, and the surrounding environment; through elements such as:
 - façade and roof modulation;
 - architectural detailing;

- rhythm of front façade widths;
- visual separation between buildings along the street or other public spaces;
- use and mix of building materials and colour that are of a high quality, durable and easily maintained;
- active frontages of buildings that address the street and other public spaces through the level of glazing, and the design, frequency, location and legibility of entrances;
- avoidance of facades and walls whose length or bulk is visually excessive or blank;
- avoidance of highly reflective, large colour blocked facades or roofs; and
- minimum floor to ceiling heights that allow flexibility of use.

As a rule of thumb for street front facades above the ground floor, and other facades that do not face onto public space, at least 20% of the façade, excluding the parapet should be articulated.

- Developments should contribute to the heritage, character and identity of the site, adjacent buildings and surrounding environment.
- Developments should incorporate effective landscaping or other means to provide for increased amenity, shade, weather protection and screening of car parking areas and buildings, and utility areas.
- The building or use of the site should recognise and reinforce the context of the site, having regard to the scale and character of the surrounding environment.
- Developments on corner sites should emphasise the street corner and provide landmark building qualities through the layout, form and architectural detailing of the development.
- The effect of not providing modulation across the front façade upon the use, design and appearance of the building, of adjoining buildings and on the continuity of the street façade.
- The signage and branding of the building and/or site should not be a dominant visual element of the development, when viewed from the site and from within the wider receiving environment.
- Developments should incorporate elements of environmentally sustainable design.

5.5 Street Interface

The issue of street interface relates to:

- Street edge continuity and definition.
- Corner articulation and legibility.
- Display windows/façade openings.
- Visibility and legibility of entrances.
- Active edges/range of activities.
- Street boundary landscaping and setbacks.

5.5.1 Explanation of Urban Design Matters

This section focuses on the quality of the interface between public and private space within both Business 1 and Business 2 zone developments. It considers that the combination of factors listed above contribute to street interface that can be addressed through careful design, in particular by providing a high level of visual interaction and activity at the street edge, and increasing the legibility of both the building and the location.

Some of the potential adverse effects from poor street interface are:

- Blank walls and generic façade designs that have little to visually stimulate and provide interest to the user, particularly pedestrian users of public space.
- Blank walls or signage covered windows at ground floor.
- Lack of activity, interest and a range of uses at ground floor.
- Poorly articulated, forgettable or underwhelming corner buildings that do not contribute to way-finding or the character and legibility of the commercial centre, particularly in the context of the Christchurch street grid of the inner suburban areas.
- Lack of recognition of the building use, including type of use and function, as well as scale of activity.
- Loss of traditional, fined-grained commercial developments and associated scale of building.
- Lack of safety and security in both public and private space.
- Car oriented street frontage degrading the urban fabric and reducing the level of comfort for pedestrians.
- Poor quality interface between the private realm and public space.
- Lack of recognition and priority given to for walking, cycling and public transport.
- Lack of street edge continuity reducing the spatial definition and perceived scale of the street, particularly for pedestrians

5.5.2 Review of Existing Development

The quality of the street interface overall was generally spread across the categories and typologies. Only a small proportion of developments were categorised overall as low quality. The exception was the articulation of corner sites which were predominantly ranked from low to moderate. However given the proportion of sites scoring overall in the low moderate and moderate categories, this indicates that there is potential for developments to contribute much more positively to public space.

Throughout all of the criteria relating to street interface, generally buildings in pedestrian oriented main streets typically ranked in the higher areas, and car oriented typologies typically scored in the lower categories, with some exceptions.

With regard to the main street frontages, there has been erosion in the quality of these from new development, particularly where buildings have been set behind car parking areas, and from

significant building losses, including whole parades of shops, resulting from the Canterbury earthquakes.

Street edge continuity is relevant to both aesthetics and is a prerequisite to active frontages, capturing pedestrian passing trade and ensuring street life, in combination with other factors. The largest scoring category for street continuity was high, with an even spread amongst the other categories. Buildings, particularly along main streets, were generally sited along the street edge, providing interest and a human scale, with any building setbacks in the context of other developments within the street. Those buildings that scored in the lower categories (which were predominantly the mall developments) provided poor street front continuity and/or blank street facades, had car parks to the front, with buildings to the centre or rear of the site, or had large or random setbacks which did not reflect the surrounding context.

Street definition is even more important in relation to corner sites as they provide a high degree of way-finding at intersections and routes of the city. They act as the glue between streets, particularly in a retail environment and are generally much more visible than buildings located within a block. The majority of sites were assessed in the low to moderate end of the range, indicating significant potential for improvement. The continuity of the street interface has been partly eroded by the positioning of car parking on the corner with buildings set behind e.g. Beckenham shops. This can weaken the legibility of the corner and form of the centre overall. The scale, height, form and detailing of the building also impact upon the corner articulation, and the success of these were variable across the review sample.

Dovetailing with street edge continuity is the inclusion of display windows and façade openings. These are a prerequisite for active streets and public spaces, including the safety and security of these areas. The dominant category for this criterion in the review was moderate-high, with the remaining scores evenly distributed across the other categories. Again the large format retail and shopping malls scored poorly because of the internalised nature of the activity, the grain of activity, and the lack of response to the surrounding streets. This is an issue given their locations, within or adjacent to pedestrian based centres, and in relation to key public transport corridors, arterial and collector streets. There were examples, such as Rotherham Street in Riccarton, where the mall development is sleeved by a more typical main street type development of smaller commercial units. This rated in the high category and presents an example of how better development interfaces may be achieved.

The visibility and legibility of ground floor entrances skewed towards the moderate to high categories indicating that generally the main entrances were located at the front of the buildings and visible with good pedestrian connection to the street. The developments that scored low in this criterion were spread across all the development scales and types. The location and quality of access to upper floors from public space was variable, with access predominantly provided internally or from the rear.

Active edges and the activity mix contribute to the economic and social vitality of the centre, and overlaps with display windows and façade openings. An active frontage depends on a high frequency of commercial units, a range of activities and the ability to engage with the interior of the building at the ground floor level. As such main street typologies scored high in this category as they comprise narrower shop widths, directly abut the street and a greater mix of activity types is generally provided for, including a range of retail and service type activities. The larger scale

buildings generated a high level of activity but with the low frequency of entrances, they did not generally contribute to the level of activity along the street, particularly as they were predominantly car based. Rather pedestrians moved between building entry point and car parking areas, with spikes of concentrated pedestrian activity, with little along the street in between.

Street boundary landscaping was scored toward the moderate to high categories, with the latter being the largest scoring category. Developments which scored high in this category provided a landscape scheme that contributed positively to the character and amenity of the street, while maintaining pedestrian views for safety and passive surveillance i.e. provided a combination of limbed up trees and shrubs or ground cover that still allowed sightlines from the street to the buildings. For a number of developments the criterion did not apply as landscaping was deemed inappropriate given the location and context, for example on a main street where achieving building continuity and visual interaction is considered more important. However, there were sites assessed within a main street context where landscaping was provided to visually mitigate poorly designed buildings, which were set back from the street. This was usually where an activity other than a retail activity was located at the ground floor level. In these instances a good building interface within the street rather than a landscaped setback would have been more appropriate to the context.

A selection of both good and poor quality street interfaces are illustrated below.



Two well articulated corner sites illustrated above, that add interest and engage at both the ground floor and upper floor levels. The upper floor glazing comprises approximately 80% of the façade. In respect to the photo to the right, the change in scale is well managed with the continuation in the level of articulation and glazing, use of colour, the continuous building line, as well as use of sympathetic materials.



The building above does not address the corner or the street well with little visual interest, lack of active edge and visual interaction, in contrast to the neighbouring building.



The development above reflects the more traditional grain and scale of the area through the unit size and accompanying changes in colour and signage. However the development is highly vehicle based in its layout and relationship to the street environment. Of interest to note is the use of sandwich boards and pylon signs as a means to capture the attention that perhaps the increased building setback undermines.

5.5.3 Urban Design Best Practice

The quality of the street interface is seen as paramount to the success and viability of commercial centres, particularly those based around a main street typology, such as Addington. However, current urban design best practice also applies the importance of this interface to larger scale retail models, given their location within an urban context and the emphasis on modal shift.

Spatial definition and degree of enclosure are important for a street's aesthetic and experiential qualities, including human scale, comfort and to create intensity of activity. A relatively high degree of enclosure is anticipated within more urban environments, generally with higher buildings and less opportunity for landscape elements. This in effect brings buildings to the street edge (zero building set backs), reinforcing the urban context. In conjunction with this is the desire to ensure continuity of the street edge, both for the comfort of users, particularly in relation to retail activity, as well as for more practical considerations such as to address CPTED and maintenance issues. This focus on a constant interface lessens in suburban areas where the focus is more on the balance between more low scale built form, landscape quality and achieving an open space character. It may also apply to larger scale business sites where from a pragmatic perspective, more flexibility is required to access and service sites.

Integral to both of these environments however is way-finding through first, the legibility of the development within the area context and then, to the building entry. Corner sites play an important role in way-finding and defining the spatial qualities, activities and character of the street, block or area. They also generally have two frontages, influencing the quality of street life, as well as accentuating the corner and providing opportunity for a wider extent of surveillance of the street. They are also points where people gather and are more likely to interact (informally). This places a greater level of importance on ensuring the quality of development on the street corner from the scale of the building, its position on the street edge, through to the level of glazing and architectural detailing. Corner buildings can be developed more intensively, be of greater height or more bold in design as an urban marker, with the trade off being a higher quality of design than may be anticipated elsewhere within the block.

Circulation, pedestrian interest and activity are promoted if people can see and understand the function/use of the building and how they might access it. Active frontages, the legibility, access to and number of entrance ways and the degree of visual interaction with the street, are all necessary prerequisites to reinforce retail functions, active street life and the safety of commercial centre users. The legibility and use of development and the contribution of development to a good public interface are promoted and can be achieved through a variety of means. These means include: direct access from footpaths to entrance ways or the configuration of the site to clearly indicate entry points, architectural detailing that accentuates entry points, including verandas and canopies and; the avoidance of barriers that will restrict access by some users.

The type and frequency of activity also contributes to street life and the viability of the centre. It is very difficult to manage the type of activity within a centre, although to a degree built form has an influence on this, unless under shared management such as a mall. However the scale of activity can be reflected through design matters such as the frequency of entry points, visual separation of units at ground floor, levels of glazing and the size of commercial units. These factors contribute to the life of the centre and its associated character.

A high level of glazing at the ground floor is both important to the safety of users, as discussed elsewhere in this report, as well as to the relationship or empathy that the user has with the building i.e. the human scale, as well as providing the economic advantage of displaying goods and services to potential customers. Both the urban design assessment and more generally design practice indicates that a good relationship between building and the street is achieved where the majority of the ground floor street façade within suburban centres is comprised of glazing and entry points.

In contrast, the street user generally has a less direct relationship with buildings above ground floor level, with the visual and interactive relationship with people on the street lessening with increased height. However, an architectural response i.e. articulation, as well as the need for informal surveillance i.e. glazing, remains important with respect to recognising and informing the character of the area, the human scale and nature of the suburban centre, as well as the need for informal surveillance to promote safety and security, albeit to a lesser degree than that at the street level.

Landscaping within private space of the street setback can contribute to the overall quality of the street interface if appropriately considered and managed. In addition, the provision of public open space in conjunction with planting, whether public or publically accessible, can enhance the street interface. However, landscaping is often used as a means to mitigate poor building design rather than to accentuate or contribute more positively to the public/private interface. As discussed earlier in this report, the role of landscape in the overall softening of building bulk should not be relied on as a design approach or means of mitigation in its own right. Rather it can offset the dominance of the built environment at ground and first floor levels where people move around, within or adjacent to the development.

In commercial centres landscaping should not be expected to dominate over buildings in privately owned space, with the exception of some Business 2 zone sites, as it would in residential areas. However, a balance should be struck where planting is still effective in softening edges, buffering activities from each other and reducing the impact of long facades, without compromising other good urban design qualities (e.g. community safety and social interaction). Within main street environments public provision of landscaping such as tree planting at the street interface is considered more appropriate than the use of private space on the frontage for this purpose. This is to ensure that the continuity of the street frontage is not overly interrupted. Landscaped private open space is generally more appropriate in conjunction with mall typologies where a more even balance of building to open space is desirable.

5.5.4 Recommended Plan Change Approach

Relevant sections of the existing City Plan policies where the amenity effects of street interface are considered include:

- External appearance of buildings.
- Visual amenity and external appearance.
- Streetscene.
- Building development and redevelopment.
- Building height.

Amendments and new inclusions to the existing suburban centres policies could reinforce the importance of the street interface in the Business section of the City Plan. A clear definition of the principles of good urban design, including Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, would accentuate the interface between the elements of design that comprise the street interface and which encourage street activity. Overall, the proposed amendments and additions to the policies are intended to facilitate higher quality design outcomes. Recommended for inclusion in the **policy section** are:

- Developments in suburban centres are designed in accordance with good urban design principles, and to promote the application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in suburban centres, including but not limited to, those noted below:
 - Development which responds positively to the existing context and character of the site, suburban centre and wider surrounding area;
 - Buildings that are oriented towards and address the street and other public spaces through the level of glazing, the design, and the frequency, location and legibility of entrances;
 - Development which maintains consistency with historical subdivision patterns relating to the rhythm of front façade widths and visual separation between buildings along the street or other public spaces;
 - Landmark development on corner sites which strengthens the urban form and legibility of the suburban centre and incorporates distinctive design treatments;
 - Development should not be dominated by vehicle access, car parking and loading areas, particularly when viewed from the street or other public spaces;
 - Development which provides a compatible mix of uses and activity appropriate to the location;
 - Development that enhances the landscape quality of the city and encourages landscape design and planting which contributes to the character and amenity of the suburban centre;
- Car parking areas and vehicle accesses should be located to support the street scene and quality of public spaces in suburban centres through appropriate placement.

Developing buildings which contribute positively to the street interface and the overall character and design of a centre include design matters such as the overall form of the building, a variety of small scale structural elements, glazing and access. It is difficult to apply a standard, such as a rule, that will guarantee an appropriate level of application of these elements to achieve the desired outcome, and qualitative assessment is preferable. However a relatively simplistic measure may be applied as a baseline, with accompanying assessment matters, and non statutory methods such as design guidelines to further support the intent of the measure. Therefore additional **rules** in the Business 1 and 2 zones are proposed with regard to the street interface to address:

- Level of glazing at the ground and upper floors
- Incorporation of verandas
- Façade articulation

- Setbacks
- Height (in respect to the Business 1 zone only)

Additional urban design **assessment matters** recommended for inclusion in the City Plan, as discussed in other sections of the report and which overlap in respect to design outcomes, that either partially or fully address building design and appearance are:

- The use, location and layout of buildings and activities within the site should provide for an active interface with the street or publically accessible open space, and provide for public use and convenience.
- The building design quality should contribute and respond positively to the street and open spaces, provide human scale and visual interest appropriate to the character and context of the site, adjacent buildings, and the surrounding environment; through elements such as;

- façade and roof modulation;
- architectural detailing;
- rhythm of front façade widths;
- visual separation between buildings along the street or other public spaces;
- use and mix of building materials and colour that are of a high quality, durable and easily maintained;
- active frontages of buildings that address the street and other public spaces through the level of glazing, and the design, frequency, location and legibility of entrances; and
- avoidance of facades and walls whose length or bulk is visually excessive or blank.

- The building should contribute to the heritage, character and identity of the site, adjacent buildings and surrounding environment.
- Developments should incorporate an integrated landscape approach that addresses public and publically accessible space providing for effective landscaping or other means to provide for increased amenity, shade, weather protection and screening of car parking areas and buildings, and utility areas.
- The building or use of the site should recognise and reinforce the context of the site, having regard to the scale and character of the surrounding environment.
- Developments on corner sites should emphasise the street corner and provide landmark building qualities through the layout, form and architectural detailing of the development.
- The effect of not providing articulation across the front façade upon the use, design and appearance of the building, of adjoining buildings and on the continuity of the street façade.

5.6 Relationship to Neighbouring Buildings and Activities

The issue of relationship to neighbouring buildings relates to:

- Height and scale.
- Building form and bulk.
- Materials and colour.
- Heritage and special character.

5.6.1 Explanation of Amenity Effects

This section focuses on the manner in which new buildings in Business 1 and Business 2 zone zones respond to neighbouring buildings, to the street and to other activities, including residential areas.

Some of the potential adverse effects from poorly managed interrelationships between buildings and between zones include:

- Visual dominance, excessive scale and bulk of development adjacent to residential areas.
- Visual dominance of new buildings over existing heritage and character.
- Lack of coherence between buildings within the streetscape.
- Loss of human scale.
- Highly reflective, visually bland and extensive facades.
- Adverse visual and physical impacts of vehicle access and parking.
- Poor quality building design and materials and lack of architectural detailing.
- The visual dominance of buildings with respect to scale, colour and extent of signage and branding, related to large format retailing.

5.6.2 Review of Existing Development

With the exception of height, the criteria relative to the relationship to neighbouring buildings were weighted toward the low end of the categories. The heights of buildings were generally compatible with neighbouring buildings, however this was considered to be largely a result of the height controls in the City Plan.

With respect to building form and bulk, the criterion were weighted towards the lower end of the categories. Developments within this bracket included a number of bulk retail stores and shopping malls. Matters such as the mass and scale of building (the combination of height, form, dimensions and extent of the building footprint) were found to be disproportionate to neighbouring buildings. This was further exacerbated by the extent and blandness of facades, with little modulation or articulation, in combination with the choice of materials and colour, including corporate branding, and their composition. The corporate branding, particularly with respect to colour branding, resulted in developments which visually dominated, rather than contributed to, their context.

These latter issues, however, were not limited to the larger developments, but applied to developments across the board. However, the larger scale developments generally had a greater

visual impact upon neighbouring properties, the street and to adjacent residential environments, primarily because of their scale and composition.

Criteria discussed earlier in this report assessed the impact of new buildings to their context in a relatively generic sense. However, special emphasis is placed on the immediate relationship of new development to existing heritage and character buildings, particularly given how much of the character and heritage has been lost as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes, and therefore the increased value of what remains.

In addition, it is recognised that heritage and character buildings have a disproportionately greater significance to the city's identity than standard buildings. However, most developments were categorised as low-moderate to moderate with respect to their response to the local heritage and character. This indicates that they could have been better designed to complement, rather than replicate, heritage or character buildings, whether through the scale, form, materials or detailing, or a combination of these.



A landscaped setback, as per the existing District Plan rules, is intended to visually soften the interface between the building and street, and the residential environment opposite the development.



The car parking building and associated signage is incongruous with the adjacent residential character and scale. While landscape is also used as a means of mitigation, it is not as effective as ensuring the nature and design of the building is appropriate to the context in the first instance.



The scale and style of the shopping mall above reflects the predominant residential use, scale and character surrounding, while ensuring visual interest and landscaping are incorporated.



Variation in character, scale, style and setback create a relatively incoherent street scene.

5.6.3 Urban Design Best Practice

With respect to building scale and mass, urban design techniques focus predominantly on visually and physically breaking down the perceived scale into more human scaled or compatible forms. Modulation, the provision of vertical or horizontal breaks or steps-in-plan, from small recesses to separation into multiple building forms, is a commonly used urban design technique. Primarily through shade and shadow, modulation gives the appearance of the building being divided into smaller and more visually manageable sized units that do not appear as overpowering in scale relative to neighbouring buildings or activities. Generally ground floor modulation within a retail environment is limited to ensure facade continuity. However, first and upper floors, and rooflines, may have a greater degree of modulation including setbacks and features such as balconies, to reduce aspects such as a vertical building bulk or overshadowing of the street.

Building modulation may be applied in isolation or in conjunction with other methods such as building articulation. Building articulation and modulation are sometimes discussed interchangeably. However building modulation focuses on the form and scale of the building and articulation on the detailing within the building form. This may be expressed through changes in material, insets and protrusions and colour, for example.

Building articulation is a key technique that can be used to respond to the qualities of heritage and character buildings. Aside from ensuring that buildings are of a compatible scale, detailing such as the rhythm and pattern of windows, the way in which the building responds to the street, the level of detailing, and the matching of horizontal lines in the facade may be influenced by the heritage and character buildings adjacent, without copying or replicating. Colour can play a very positive role in not only creating greater articulation but in contributing to a more cohesive overall character, or accentuating elements that give greater legibility to developments within a commercial centre, without creating visually dominant development.

Both setback distance and landscaping also have a role to play in reducing and softening building bulk and ensuring privacy for neighbouring sites. However these should not be relied on as the first response. Rather, ensuring that the scale, massing and design is compatible with neighbouring buildings and activities is the first step, with landscape potentially as a secondary measure to offset the dominance of the buildings. Within more urban commercial centres, such as main street environments this is particularly applicable, where it is not expected that that landscape would be a more dominant element over buildings. But a balance should be struck that provides for both a high amenity environment and well as allowing for good street-side activity.

Within mixed use residential/commercial environments, as with more intensive residential environments such as the Living 3 zone developments, in respect to the residential components of the development, design consideration should be also give to elements such as balconies, window offsets and upper floor setbacks to allow for privacy between commercial and residential uses, and between buildings containing residential use.

5.6.4 Recommended Plan Change Approach

Relevant sections of the existing City Plan policies where the relationships between neighbouring buildings and activities are considered include:

- Building design and flexibility.

- Visual amenity and external appearance.
- Building development and redevelopment.
- Residential amenity.
- Signage.

Amendments and new inclusions to the existing suburban centres policies in the Business section of the City Plan could reinforce the importance of achieving compatible relationships between neighbouring buildings and activities and between new development and existing character and heritage buildings. Recommended for inclusion in the **policy section** are:

- Developments in suburban centres are designed in accordance with good urban design principles, and to promote the application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in suburban centres, including but not limited to, those noted below:
 - Development which responds positively to the existing context and character of the site, suburban centre and wider surrounding area;
 - Buildings that are oriented towards and address the street and other public spaces through the level of glazing, the design, and the frequency, location and legibility of entrances;
 - Development which maintains consistency with historical subdivision patterns relating to the rhythm of front façade widths and visual separation between buildings along the street or other public spaces;
 - Development should not be dominated by vehicle access, car parking and loading areas, particularly when viewed from the street or other public spaces;
 - Development that enhances the landscape quality of the city and encourages landscape design and planting which contributes to the character and amenity of the suburban centre.

In addition amendments to **rules** in the Business 1 and 2 zones are proposed to address:

- Façade articulation
- Residential amenity

Additional urban design **assessment matters** recommended for inclusion in the City Plan that either partially or fully address relationships to neighbouring buildings and activities are:

- The building design quality should contribute and respond positively to the street and open spaces, provide human scale and visual interest appropriate to the character and context of the site, adjacent buildings, and the surrounding environment; through elements such as;
 - façade and roof modulation;
 - architectural detailing;
 - rhythm of front façade widths;
 - visual separation between buildings along the street or other public spaces;
 - active frontages of buildings that address the street and other public spaces through the

level of glazing, and the design, frequency, location and legibility of entrances;

– avoidance of facades and walls whose length or bulk is visually excessive or blank.

- The building should contribute to the heritage, character and identity of the site, adjacent buildings and surrounding environment.
- Developments should incorporate effective landscaping or other means to provide for increased amenity, shade, weather protection and screening of car parking areas and buildings, and utility areas.
- The building or use of the site should recognise and reinforce the context of the site, having regard to the scale and character of the surrounding environment.
- Mixed use developments should incorporate effective means, such as minimum distances between windows to habitable rooms, to ensure a good level of residential amenity.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This technical report considers the urban design, appearance, amenity and layout provisions of the Business 1 and 2 zones. It does not examine:

- Building height, scale and site density
- The location and extent of zone boundaries
- Activities within the zones
- Tree and landscaping requirements
- Setbacks from neighbours
- Sunlight and outlook
- Onsite or offsite parking (ratios or location)

The Business 1 and 2 zones are identified as local and district suburban centres. They sit within a hierarchy of statutory and non statutory policies and plans, which encourage and require the delivery of high quality urban design.

The suburban centres range significantly in size and in development typologies, from the single corner dairy to the traditional main street, to the larger scale malls, or a combination of these. The suburban centres are an integral element to the character and identity of Christchurch, serving the local and district retail and service needs of the population. Many of them have, or have had, a highly valued character. However, in a number of centres this has been eroded through a combination of incompatible or poor development and the extensive damage and demolition of buildings as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes. The ongoing viability and vitality of these centres is to a large extent dependent upon the quality, amenity and safety of these centres.

Communities living in and around the suburban centres have expectations as to what their centres might provide, including a healthy range of transport options, goods and services and centres which provide for high quality public space. This has taken on greater significance with the number of rebuilds required in suburban centres and the overall loss of character and identity across the city.

The review of recent development identified high quality developments in both the Business 1 and Business 2 zones, indicating that producing high quality urban design is achievable. However, the review also indicated that there are a significant number of developments which are not achieving an appropriate balance between development objectives and design matters that result in a good quality development. Individually these developments may not be an issue, depending upon their size. However the larger scale developments which anchor suburban centres, or a collective of smaller developments within a neighbourhood, can have a significant impact on the viability of the centre they are located in.

The review also noted that main street typologies generally scored better than supermarket and mall developments. This recognised the strong interrelationships and correlation between the various design criteria, meaning that each aspect of the development's design impacted on the overall design quality. The structuring or layout of the site right through to the articulation of the building has an impact on the resultant quality. The review also recognised the importance of context and the differing design responses to it.

It appears evident that the current City Plan provisions are unlikely to achieve adequate standards of quality in respect to urban design in the development and redevelopment in the Business 1 and 2 zones. The scale of the rebuild of many of the suburban centres is such that there is significant opportunity for poor design outcomes. This technical report considers a range of interrelated design issues. For each of these it covered the likely effects of these issues not being addressed, urban design best practice in the context of suburban centres, and provided recommended approaches for the plan change. Many of these issues are relatively subtle and in isolation of each other may not be considered of importance. Nonetheless, as a collective they provide the overall design quality. Therefore, any changes proposed to the City Plan need to work as an integrated package, as emphasised throughout this report.

In providing recommended approaches for the plan change there are suggestions for additional policy wording, rule changes and a series of urban design assessment matters. It is also important to consider the anticipated level of development in the coming years, and the extent of this across the city requiring site specific responses. This recognises that the balance of design elements in any one development approach may differ depending upon the context.

In relation to additional development in the future, it is necessary to bear in mind that higher Floor Area Ratios (FAR's) or redevelopment of historical sites using the current on-site parking ratios, will require additional land for surface parking given the general lack of viability of basement parking in Christchurch at this point in time. This may have flow on impacts including a lack of residential coherence when adjacent residential properties may be converted to surface parking areas.

The recommended approach through the objectives and policies framework is to introduce and reinforce the concept of urban design, providing some clarity and definition to this. Strengthening the policies is also intended to provide greater recognition of the interrelationship between design elements and matters such as safety and security. It covers good urban design principles rather than development typologies or architectural styles.

Prior to the introduction of Plan Change 53 for the Living 3 and 4 zones, most recent development is derived from rule-based development controls. Urban design often has competing or conflicting design objectives and compromises may have to be made to achieve a better overall balance of development outcomes. The assessment matters approach allows for a more responsive approach on a case by case basis, better recognising the context of the development proposal. They also are intended to provide clear direction to developers of the development outcomes anticipated.

Recommended proposed changes to the City Plan Business 1 and 2 zones in respect to Site Layout, Appearance and Amenity are summarised below:

- Amend suburban centres objective to reinforce the concept and importance of urban design.
- Amend policies and add relevant principles including:
 - Building design and appearance;
 - Principles of high quality urban design;
 - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Add a policy relating to car parking and vehicle access.

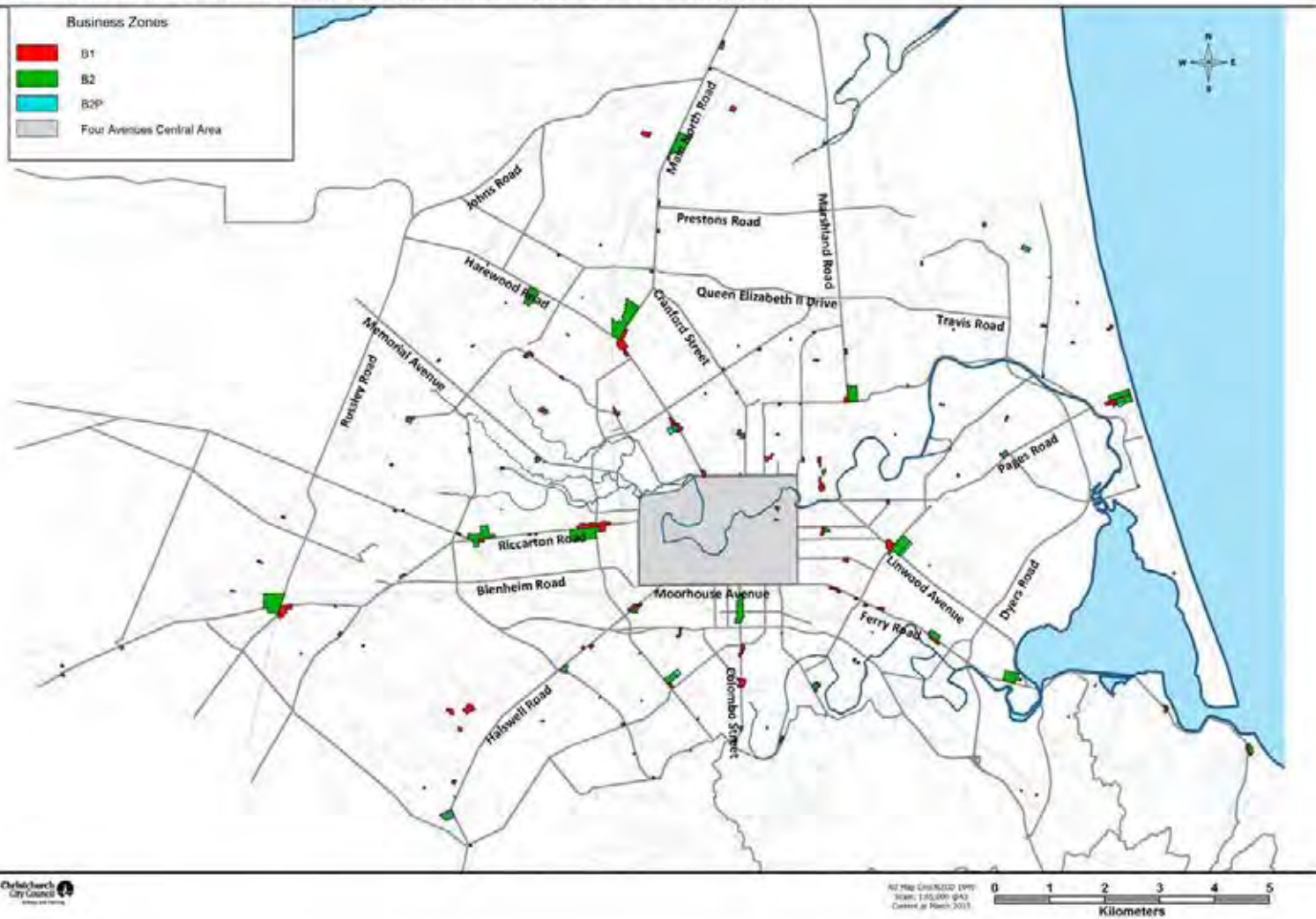
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J F J Schroder
Principal Advisor Urban Design

- Remove minimum car park numbers required and replace with an Integrated Transport Assessment (ITA).
- Add a rule (or information requirement) that requires the provision of a site and context analysis.
- Add rules that relate to the interface between buildings and publically accessible space and routes in relation to glazing, verandas, façade articulation, building setback and pedestrian entry.
- Add a rule relating to height in the Business 1 zone only.
- Include additional urban design assessment matters to complement, provide direction and to reinforce the rules.
- In addition to the changes to the objective, policies, rules and assessment matters amend the activity status for new developments and redevelopments in the Business 1 and 2 zones to a restricted discretionary activity status.
- Amend and add to Explanations and Reasons, and to the Environmental Results Anticipated to provide further clarity.

Finally it is important to communicate a clear message to developers on the intentions and approaches to raise the development quality with respect to urban design, and how this might add value and be cost effectively achieved. There are a range of non statutory tools available and intended to be developed to complement the plan change, including the Suburban Centres Masterplans, design guidance and use of pre application design advice from Council staff and the Christchurch Urban Design Panel. These tools provide an additional level of certainty and visual clarification as to what is required of developers with respect to development design outcomes. It is clear that, particularly in the context of the Christchurch rebuild, the consequences of poor urban design outcomes could have a significant impact on the ongoing vitality and viability of Christchurch's suburban centres. Many of the benefits of high quality design are not necessarily immediately visible, but add value over the long term, socially, economically and environmentally.

Location of B1 and B2 and B2P Zones in Christchurch City as of the 12th March 2013



Plan Change 56 – Urban Design Review

Issues and Options Report

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J F J Schroder
Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The intent of proposed Plan Change 56 is to facilitate a higher standard of urban design in the Business 1 (District Fringe/Local Centre), Business 2 (District Centre Core) and Business 2P (District Centre Core Parking) zones of the Christchurch City Plan. This includes matters such as: the provision of mixed use activity; the layout of buildings on a site; a buildings design and appearance; and how it relates to public space, including ensuring the personal safety of users, and; all of these activities and how they relate to car parking standards.

The purpose of this report is to identify whether research conclusions which have been informing proposed Plan Change 56 are still as relevant today as they were at the time of assessment. This includes issues and options derived from urban design research studies undertaken from 2008 to the present. Verifying this work is of particular importance given additional influences on the development of the City in the intervening years, the most obvious of these being the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011. In addition this report outlines the current policy framework, proposed changes to this and the general progression of urban design provisions in Christchurch and elsewhere in New Zealand.

1.2 Scope of Work

High quality urban design is integral to a place's form, feel and function. The Christchurch City Plan recognises the importance of high quality urban design through objectives, policies, and methods, including urban design assessment matters, for much of the city. However, there has been a significant level of concern, particularly following the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010/2011, that the city's local and district centres have not, and will not, achieve the quality of environment that is anticipated by the wider community for these zones. More specific issues identified through survey work and research included:

- The generic quality of district and neighbourhood centres, with little reflection of the historic grain, pattern of development and identity of the locale
- Lack of recognition of human scale and comfort
- Poor quality interface between public space and the private realm
- Lack of vitality and activity
- Poor accessibility (poor linkages and loss of opportunity for walking and cycling)
- Adverse visual and physical impacts of vehicle access and parking
- Lack of recognition of principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in site layout and building design
- Lack of recognition of relationships with neighbouring developments, including scale, site design, connectivity, grain and architectural detailing
- Poor quality of building and materials and lack of detailing
- Poor level of amenity overall
- Lack of recognition of environmental design in the site and building design
- The scale, colour and extent of signage and branding related to large format retailing.

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J F J Schroder
Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

Options to address these issues included:

- Option 1** Retain the status quo
- Option 2** Use non regulatory design guides
- Option 3** Use financial incentives and rates relief
- Option 4** Use urban design rules
- Option 5** Use urban design rules together with urban design assessment matters.

1.3 Current Recommendations

More recent research has reconfirmed that the issues outlined above continue to be relevant and of significance in the B1, B2 and B2P zones. As a consequence, recommendations resulting from the accumulated research provide the basis for proposed changes to the Christchurch City Plan, identified as proposed Plan Change 56. These recommendations include the following:

- The adoption of City Plan policies addressing: building design and appearance; street interface; relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces; pedestrian access and amenity, car parking and vehicle access.
- Specific urban design rules including a requirement for resource consent on urban design matters.
- Restricted discretionary activity status for design and appearance with the ability to achieve a controlled activity status if fundamental urban design assessment matters are met pre application.
- Introduction of urban design assessment matters for limited discretionary and controlled activities.
- Rules enabling a mix of commercial and residential use, with a rule ensuring that the use at the ground floor is commercial where it abuts public space such as the street.
- Minimums on residential unit sizes and requirements for outdoor open space in mixed use developments.
- Changes to transport and parking to minimise the impact of vehicle movement and parking.
- Provisions to better manage site access.
- Introduction of design guidance to support design and appearance standards.
- Use of the Christchurch Urban Design Panel for design review to extend to include B1 zone proposals.

The scope of this review draws on the conclusions of research work and the results of various consultation processes undertaken by the Christchurch City Council and their agents. In addition it addresses the current policy framework and provides a brief subject scan of the experience of other local authorities and resultant approaches to establish a yard stick to achieving high quality urban design outcomes.

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J F J Schroder
 Principal Advisor – Urban Design
 Strategy and Planning Group

2.0 Strategy and Policy Framework

The following is the policy framework influencing this work, both statutory and non statutory.

	Statutory	Non statutory
National		NZ Urban Design Protocol National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
Regional & sub regional	Canterbury Regional Policy Statement	Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy
City	Christchurch City Plan Draft Christchurch Central City District Plan	

2.1 New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (NZ UDP 2005)

The NZ Urban Design Protocol is a voluntary agreement between signatories, of which the Christchurch City Council is one. It commits the signatories to specific urban design initiatives intended to raise the quality of urban design within their town or city.

The collective actions that individual signatories take can make a significant difference to the quality and success of urban design in New Zealand’s towns and cities.

The Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities:

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

While non statutory the NZ UDP provides a mandate for at least the consideration of high quality urban design. Signatories to the Protocol include public and private sector organisations and agencies who have a substantive influence on the legislative and strategic framework that guides local authority policy, as well as results in on-the-ground implementation. The Protocol also provides a greater collective understanding of what high quality design outcomes are and the value that is added by encouraging them in practice, and how it may be achieved.

In conjunction with the NZ UDP research was undertaken resulting in the publication of *The Value of Urban Design* (2006). The research showed conclusively that good urban design has

the potential to create value for communities, individuals, the economy and the environment, with the potential benefits including:

- Better public health
- Greater social equity
- Enhanced land values
- A more vibrant local economy
- Reduced vehicle emissions
- More sustainable use of non-renewable resources.

2.2 National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED 2005)

The National Guidelines for CPTED provides local authorities with a framework for incorporating crime prevention within quality urban designs by focusing on reducing the opportunity to commit crime, therefore lessening the motivation to offend. CPTED reduces criminal opportunity and fosters positive social interaction among legitimate users of space.

There are four key overlapping CPTED principles which are:

1. **Surveillance** - people are present and can see what is going on.
2. **Access management** - methods are used to attract people and vehicles to some places and restrict them from others.
3. **Territorial reinforcement** - clear boundaries encourage community 'ownership' of the space.
4. **Quality environments** - good quality, well maintained places attract people and support surveillance.

In addition to the CPTED principles, the guideline introduces seven qualities of safer places intended to improve the urban environment while reducing crime and the fear of crime,. These are listed below:

- **Access: Safe movement and connections**
Places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient and safe movement without compromising security.
- **Surveillance and sightlines: See and be seen**
Places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked, and clear sightlines and good lighting provide maximum visibility.
- **Layout: Clear and logical orientation**
Places laid out to discourage crime, enhance perception of safety and help orientation and way-finding.
- **Activity mix: Eyes on the street**
Places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times by promoting a compatible mix of uses and increased use of public spaces.
- **Sense of ownership: Showing a space is cared for**

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 Principal Advisor – Urban Design
 Strategy and Planning Group

Places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community.

- **Quality environments: Well designed, managed and maintained environments**

Places that provide a quality environment and are designed with management and maintenance in mind to discourage crime and promote community safety in the present and the future.

- **Physical protection: Using active security measures**

Places that include necessary, well designed security features and elements.

The CPTED principles and qualities are integral to achieving high quality urban design. Many of the matters identified as issues in the B1 and B2 zone research relate to the qualities of a safer place, as well as to the functional and aesthetic attributes of good urban design. Site layout and the interface between buildings and spaces are particularly important elements in relation to CPTED.

2.3 **Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS 2007) and Regional Policy Statement Chapter 12A (RPS 2011)**

The UDS provides a framework for the growth, development and enhancement of the urban and rural areas of the Greater Christchurch sub region for the period to 2041.

Chapter 12A of the RPS, adopted in 2011, provides the statutory policy direction and an implementation package to achieve the UDS. Objectives, policies and rules in district and city plans are the key means by which Chapter 12A is given effect. It also incorporates amendments made as a result of the impacts of the Canterbury earthquakes in 2010 and 2012.

The strategic vision for 2041 is for Greater Christchurch to have:

- Enhanced lifestyles
- Enhanced environments
- Prosperous economies
- Managed growth
- Integrated and collaborate leadership.

Chapter 12A outlines the following policy (paraphrased) that more specifically applies to achieving high quality urban design in the Business 1 and 2 zones in Christchurch, both in existing and new urban centres.

12A.4 Policies

Policy 7: Development Form and Design

Greenfields development, intensification, and development of Key Activity Centres should give effect to urban design best practice. The principles of the NZ Urban Design Protocol (Ministry for the Environment, 2005) shall be observed when preparing or assessing any urban development and the following matters shall be provided for:

- (a) good safe connectivity within the area, and to surrounding areas, by a variety of transport modes, including motor vehicles, cycling, pedestrian and public transport, and provision for easy and safe transfer between modes of transport;
- (b) location within walkable distance to community, social and commercial facilities;

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- (c) provision for effective, efficient and attractive walk and cycleways, preferably integrated with open space and stormwater detention areas, within, across and linking beyond the area;
- (d) provision for a range of areas of residential densities and lot sizes, with higher residential densities located within walking distance of Key Activity Centres and commercial centres;
- (e) provision for the protection of surface and groundwater quality, including appropriate stormwater management facilities to avoid down stream flooding and to preserve or enhance water quality;
- (f) provision for sufficient and integrated open spaces and parks to enable people to meet their recreation needs, with higher levels of public open space for areas of higher residential densities;
- (g) protection and enhancement of significant natural, ecological, landscape, cultural and historic heritage features;
- (h) demonstration of how other adverse effects on the environment are to be avoided, remedied or mitigated;
- (i) provision for a high standard of visual interest and amenity;
- (j) provision for people’s health and well-being through good building design, including energy efficiency and the provision of natural light;
- (k) effective and efficient use of existing and new infrastructure networks; and
- (l) appropriate relationships in terms of scale and style with the surrounding environment.

The RPS, Chapter 12A, is a statutory document that the Christchurch City Plan must not be inconsistent with. Many of the Key Activity Centres identified in the RPS incorporate Business 2 zones and therefore have a high degree of relevance with regard to the strategic and policy direction provided by Chapter 12A. Any changes to the Business 2 zones should not be inconsistent with these provisions, which as outlined above, provide very specific design intentions.

2.4 Christchurch City Plan

The Christchurch City Plan currently lacks a specific objectives and policies framework in regard to urban design. Rather it rather references city form, urban consolidation, amenity and character, amongst other matters. However both private plan changes and plan changes initiated by Council in recent years have provided a much stronger foundation for achieving high quality urban design in new urban growth areas and existing higher density residential zones, including the Living 3 and 4 zones. These include specific policies, new rules and an accompanying hierarchy of assessment matters to better define good urban design outcomes and measures. Design guides are also being prepared to accompany and reinforce these matters.

2.4.1 *Plan Change 53, Urban Design and Appearance in the Living 3 and 4 Zones (adopted in July 2011)*

While Plan Change 53 relates to medium density living zones only, it does set a precedent in regard to the level of urban design assessment that may be applied to achieve higher quality urban design. In addition to new policies and rules adopted through Plan Change 53, the development of 3 or more units triggers, as a limited discretionary activity, the assessment matters relating to urban design, amenity and appearance. The limited discretionary activity

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status associated with the assessment matters generally provides the opportunity for the Council to discuss the proposal in detail with the Applicant. This is proving to be very useful in terms of achieving better quality design outcomes, particularly when the discussion is undertaken pre application, as well as increasing the collective knowledge of Council staff and the development community.

Many of the matters that have been raised through the 2008 -2012 issues and options papers and consultation processes (addressed in more detail later in this report), which have lead to the instigation of proposed Plan Change 56, are very similar, or the same, as those matters addressed through Plan Change 53. This includes matters such as the relationship of the development with the street, impact of car parking, and visual amenity and appearance.

2.4.2 Private Plan Changes and variations to the Christchurch City Plan (Ongoing)

In addition to Plan Change 53, there have been various plan changes, both Council and privately initiated, that address urban design matters in some detail. These apply to a variety of zones and area outcomes, including business activities within the Living G zones of designated urban growth areas. With the adoption of Chapter 12A to the Regional Policy Statement emphasis on high quality urban design in urban growth areas will also continue to increase, as well as stated earlier, redevelopment within Key Activity Centres.

The recent plan changes in particular, indicate that urban design matters within the statutory context are gaining traction and achieving high quality urban design has become considerably more important in recent years. With regard to proposed Plan Change 56 the recent plan changes give direction to the potential level of intervention which may be considered acceptable, and a in part a policy and provisions framework to achieve it.

2.4.3 Draft Christchurch Central City District Plan (2011)

At the time of writing the Draft Central City Plan (CCP) was with the Minister of Earthquake Recovery for Christchurch for review and potential adoption. The Draft CCP identifies a number of key urban design changes to the operative Christchurch City Plan that are relevant to Plan Change 56, in particular, proposed changes to the Central City Business 1 Zones. The proposed changes include:

- Promotion of residential activities

Residential activities are permitted, except for within the first 10m of the ground floor as measured from the road boundary. This restriction is to recognise that local convenience retail and service use is intended as the primary function in that context. In addition provisions are included to ensure that any residential units within the development have a minimum level of amenity.
- Verandas

New buildings that have frontage to a road are to provide a veranda or other means of weather protection with continuous cover for pedestrians.
- Heights, maximum and minimum floors

Maximum height limit of 11m, which is complementary to the building height limits in the surrounding living zones.
- Building adaptability/flexibility

New commercial buildings are now required to provide ground floor ceiling heights of at least 3 metres to enable a range of future uses.

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Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

- Small scale retail

A restriction on the floor area of new retail uses was introduced. This is to ensure that larger format retail and service activities that are better located in the Central City Core and Central City Fringe zone are dissuaded from trying to establish in the Central City B1 zones. The large format activities, in general, are not designed to meet the convenience day to day needs of local residents.

- Urban design and amenity assessment and Outline Development Plan approval

Council has introduced a requirement for an urban design assessment for the majority of new buildings. Proposals will be assessed against a number of urban design criteria which are specified in the plan.

It would be rational to ensure alignment between the suburban Business 1 zones and the proposed Central City Business 1 provisions to keep things simple for prospective developers and the public. At the time of writing the draft Central City Plan is in a state of limbo, however the design outcomes intended are quite clear in support of the quality of the B1 zones. In addition to the rules and assessment matters for the Central City B1 zone, it is anticipated that there would be accompanying design guidance.

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3.0 Current Situation and Influences

A clear pattern of redevelopment and consolidation (expansion of floor area) within existing sites is emerging from of the 2010/2011 earthquakes. As a result there appears to be a general sense that many of the B1 and 2 zones are currently vulnerable to poor design outcomes because of the lack of City Plan design provisions in B1 and 2 zones. In addition the ability to undertake a quality rebuild has become negligible in some areas where provisions, such as the number of car parks required, place a heavy burden on the quantity of site required to accommodate these provisions.

In general quality urban design is arguably seen as having far greater importance now than ever as the city identity is rebuilt. In suburban areas where many of the B1 zones played an important role in the legibility of the local area by way of location, visibility, the activity and the built form, ensuring that the relevance of the building to this context is vital. In addition the B2 zones, with pressure for expansion as a result of the loss of much of the City Centre commercial area, are playing a far greater and more varied role than previously in community life.

3.1 Key Activity Centres

As discussed earlier, the RPS (Chapter 12A) identifies Key Activity Centres in Christchurch. These centres encompass Business 1 and 2 zones, including the City's malls. The Council is facing increasing pressure from the owners of the suburban malls to rebuild and consolidate activity in and around these sites, primarily for additional commercial and retail activity, while the Central City is unavailable. These malls in essence, have begun to take on a neighbourhood or town centre function in the interim. As such the provision of not only private amenity and good urban design practice is important, but the public role of these places takes on greater significance and therefore so too does the need for high quality urban design, particularly in regard to the safety of users.

3.2 Suburban Centres Masterplans

The Suburban Centres Programme is a master planning initiative for suburban commercial centres, which include Business 1 and 2 and town centre zones, which experienced a high degree of earthquake damage and that need public and private sector assistance to rebuild. At the time of writing eight suburban masterplans were at various stages of development, from project initiation to near completion. Six of the masterplans have been through at least one community consultation phase. The masterplan areas include:

- Lyttleton
- Sydenham
- Linwood Village
- Selwyn Street Shops
- Sumner Village Centre
- Ferry Road (incorporating Woolston and Ferrymead)
- Edgeware Village
- New Brighton.

What has come out to date very strongly from the community consultation, in all except one of the master plan areas, is the desire for site and building redevelopment that:

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J F J Schroder
Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

- is resilient and flexible
- recognises the character of the centre
- is of a high quality design
- ensures that buildings are built right up to the street, and car parking does not dominate the site
- protects the remaining built character that contributes positively to the centre.

In conjunction with this there are a number of actions/methods proposed to achieve these matters including: community representation on the Urban Design Panel; amendments to the City and District Plans; and design and character guidance.

In addition to this, other communities centred on areas such as Beckenham¹ have taken the initiative to instigate discussions on what the community would like to see in terms of design for their local shopping centre. In part this was to ensure better quality design in their rebuilds, both because an opportunity has arisen through earthquake damage, and in response to more recent developments constructed in the centre over the past few years that members of the community felt had been detrimental to the character and quality of their area. This more than suggests that good design is being taken seriously by the community.

3.3 Christchurch Urban Design Panel

The Christchurch Urban Design Panel has to a degree influenced better urban design outcomes, particularly where proposals come in at a pre application (prior to a resource consent being lodged) stage and/or recommendations made by the Panel are supported by urban design provisions in the City Plan. The assessment matters provided as part of Plan Change 53 (Living 3 & 4 zones) have ensured that the Urban Design Panel have a very clear set of matters which they can relate their recommendations to for the benefit of the Applicant and the Council. This appears to have been a very successful approach in this respect and there have been significant changes to Business 2 zoned developments resulting from feedback received from the Panel. Currently the Business 1 zones are not included in the list of Urban Design Panel criteria (identified within the Panel's Terms of Reference), but further consideration could be given to this.

¹ Spreydon-Heathcote Community Board initiated workshop December 2011

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J F J Schroder
Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

4.0 Local Authority Approaches

In the last decade or so there have been substantial inroads in regard to recognising the importance of urban design to the look, feel and function of our towns and cities. This was emphasised and supported with the release of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol in 2004 and subsequent research including *The Value of Urban Design* (Ministry for the Environment 2006), as well as toolkits and further research, guidance and case studies collated by various NZ Government ministries.

The *Urban Design Stocktake of Resource Management Plans and Policies* (Ministry for the Environment 2009) provides a snapshot of urban design provisions in local authority planning documents. These were assessed on a series of urban design criteria relating to the NZ Urban Design Protocol's 7 principles. Within metropolitan council plans, such as the Christchurch City Plan, the research indicated that there is a high level of urban design content (such as amenity, design, appearance and context) within the plans, but varying levels of urban design provisions.

Urban design practice has been adopted, largely through the development of urban design strategies (e.g. Tauranga Urban Design Strategy, Hamilton City Council's Cityscope) and accompanying action plans. In addition greater emphasis has been placed on the incorporation of urban design objectives, policies and provisions, including statutory design guides (design codes) into second generation district plans (e.g. Kapiti Coast District Plan, Wellington City District Plan). Master plans and structure plans have also become an important tool for delivering better urban design outcomes, with accompanying district plan provisions, embedding them within the statutory context (Plan Change 43 - East Belfast, Christchurch).

Selwyn District Council, a partner in the UDS 2007, has recently adopted urban design policies and provisions, including assessment matters, for their town centres - Business 1 zones Plan Change 29 (under appeal). These are very similar to those proposed in the *Urban Design Technical Report* discussed earlier and include matters such as:

Policies relating to:

- The maintenance and establishment of pleasant streets and attractive public areas

Rules relating to:

- Location of on-site parking
- Buildings fronting the street
- Incorporation of verandas

Assessment matters relating to:

- The visual integration of large buildings with the context
- The design and location of active frontages.

In addition a non statutory design guide has been prepared to inform and accompany Plan Change 29.

Waimakariri District Council, another partner in the UDS 2007 is currently pursuing a similar plan change. Given that these plan changes are already adopted or underway, they offer the opportunity to inform Christchurch City Plan and ensure some alignment across the Canterbury sub region, in conjunction with the UDS 2007 and the RPS - Chapter 12A.

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J F J Schroder
 Principal Advisor – Urban Design
 Strategy and Planning Group

5.0 Business 1 and 2 Zone Studies

The Urban Design Issues and Options Study (2008), associated Consultation Report (2009) and Urban Design Technical Report (2011) are in essence consistent in the issues that arose in regard to the quality of urban design, conclusions and recommendations.

5.1 Urban Design Issues and Options Study (2008)* and Urban Design Issues and Options for the Central City Business Zones and Business 2 Zones (2009)*

*These studies were undertaken in relation to the Central City Business Zones and the Business 2 Zones. They did not include the Business 1 Zone. For the purpose of this report, the Central City issues and outcomes are excluded, with only the Business 2 matters identified.

There were a number of general design themes and conclusions in regard to Business 2 Zones. These included:

- Lack of understanding of good urban design
- Poor relationship to the context
- Just plain ugly
- Lack of local identity
- Poor connection to the public realm, unsafe public spaces, lack of visual and physical links
- Loss of traditional street and block patterns
- Unsustainable.

Each urban design element and the related issues and opportunities were outlined in the 2008 report in some detail, which is noted below. In addition accompanying this, as a result of the recent research and survey work, it is noted whether the issues and opportunities remain relevant in 2012.

Urban Design Element	Issues	Opportunities	Relevant in 2012
City structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of development on adjacent zones i.e. business to residential 		Yes
Legibility of landmarks, buildings & spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle traffic and poor quality settings can detract from landmarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide integrated artwork and signage 	Yes
Mixed use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of mixed use • Lack of after hours activity in public space • Reverse sensitivity effects of incompatible land use • City Plan zones based on single permitted use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more than one use on a site • Encourage adaptability and flexibility through the development's life • Encourage design and appropriate controls to mitigate effects 	Yes
Integrated transport and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport not easily accessible from malls • Car parking dominates new developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce parking restrictions to encourage alternative transport modes • Create easily accessible 	Yes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum parking numbers restrict development density • Vehicles dominate streets and public space • High water tables limit feasibility of basement parking 	<p>transport facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict on-street parking volumes • Provide innovative alternatives to traditional car parking • Provide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at journey end 	
Building edges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank walls or signage covered windows at ground floor • Lack of activity, interest and a range of uses at ground floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break up facades with windows, doorways, canopies, detail etc • Provide activities overlooking streets and public spaces 	Yes
Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large size of street blocks increase walking distances • Large blocks encourage inefficient land use • Pedestrian desire lines are restricted • Car dominance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance existing and introduce new mid block lanes and pedestrian linkages • Provide opportunities for new public spaces • Reduce and restrict clutter • Provide clear and safe access • Provide appropriate forms of lighting 	In part
Neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion of traditional neighbourhoods through vehicle oriented development at malls and large format retail • Loss of walkability as a result of scale • Loss of identity as a result of corporate branding and colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance neighbourhood centres • Locate both commercial and community facilities in neighbourhood centres • Enhance local neighbourhood identity • Improve quality of design in neighbourhood centres 	Yes
Built heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsympathetic new buildings and materials in close proximity to heritage sites • Façadism • Large obtrusive signage and wall colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sympathetic siting, scale, design, materials, colours and signage for new development • Take cues from, without replicating, heritage context 	Yes
Building form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive scale and bulk of development adjacent to residential areas • Loss of traditional fined-grained commercial developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more consistent and appropriate building heights • Encourage more sympathetic scale and architecture 	Yes
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domination of street frontage by vehicle access and parking • Poor quality pedestrian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control vehicle access and parking • Require pedestrian facilities and weather protection 	In part

	<p>access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited cycle access to sites • Poor integration with public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear pedestrian access/front doors • Provide quality cycle access and stands • Integrate new development with multi modal transport options • Improve universal access (i.e. access for all people) • Give pedestrians right of way on footpaths 	
Sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion of identity through inappropriate development • Issues for tangata whenua • Unsympathetic architectural design • Large scale corporate branding • Large format retailing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage developments to incorporate local features and identity • Include art works and landscape features into development relating to the local community • Encourage design reflecting local context • Use colours and signage sensitively 	Yes
Public spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage cluttering streets and overwhelming building facades • Poor public spaces around new development • Cluttered public spaces • Lack of recognition of important corners to public spaces • Visually closed and fortress like street frontages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the provision of natural surveillance through the use of adequate and well sited windows and doors opening onto the street, bus stops and public spaces • Provide clear sight lines across newly designed open space and through new development • Provide a high standard of exterior lighting • Create well lit and maintained cycle and pedestrian routes • Address the street and open space sympathetically i.e. provide seating and shade 	
Sustainable design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor climatic design such as lack of solar orientation and insulation • Extensive impermeable surface • Lack of storm water treatment • Short term design approach (cheap/poor quality materials), high use of imported and high energy embodied materials • Lack of retention/reuse of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of natural ventilation systems • Orientate to gain shelter and solar access • Use on site storm water devices • Encourage alternative energy systems, insulation and reuse of materials • Encourage developments that can be easily adapted in the future • Use appropriate local materials 	Yes

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Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

	existing buildings through costs of earthquake strengthening		
Crime prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public space that feels unsafe and is not well used • Spaces with no sight lines, blind corners, dense vegetation etc • Poor exterior lighting • Lack of outlook (passive surveillance) over streets, bus stops and other public space • Recessed areas such as doorways • Poorly located ATM machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the provision of natural surveillance • Provide clear sightlines through development • Provide a high standard of exterior lighting • Create well lit and maintained pedestrian and cycle ways • Consider closing some access at night 	Yes

Overall many of these issues are relevant to both the Business 2 and Business 1 zones. Some of the issues have been addressed in part in these zones, or more fully in other zones, within the Christchurch City Plan. However the issues largely remain as pertinent today as they were in 2008. In some instances the Christchurch earthquakes have exacerbated these issues for example: in regard to the feasibility of basement car parking; and the loss of legibility as a result of the demolition of traditional corner buildings.

The Summary of Consultation (2009) reinforced the importance and extent of the issues that were raised in the 2008 report. It was generally considered that the quality of new development needed to be to a higher standard of urban design with greater innovation and more awareness and consideration of surrounding character and context. Smaller scale development with a higher level of integration with the surrounds was highly valued, for example Merivale Mall.

A number of options were identified to address the issues noted in the 2008 report. These included:

- Option 1:** Retain the status quo
- Option 2:** Use non regulatory design guides
- Option 3:** Use financial incentives and rates relief
- Option 4:** Use urban design rules for the Business 2 zone
- Option 5:** Use urban design rules together with urban design assessment matters for the Business 2 zone.

It was considered that more urban design intervention, such as regulatory control was needed. Generally developers and landowners supported more, but not excessive, regulatory intervention. Early engagement with Council and the input of the Urban Design Panel was also strongly supported. However the use of financial incentives had a mixed review, although the reasoning behind why this was not considered a worthwhile option is not clear.

From the options identified in the Issues and Options Report 2008 it would appear that, with the exception of Options 1 and 3, the remainder were generally well supported. Each of

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Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

these options is not mutually exclusive but could effectively work as a comprehensive response, or tool package.

5.2 Urban Design Technical Report, Plan Change 56 – Results and Recommendations (2011)

The *Urban Design Technical Report* (2011) was prepared to further explore urban design matters in the Central City and Business 1 and 2 zones. The precursor to this report, the site analysis, was undertaken between November 2010 and July 2011. During this time the amount of earthquake damage across the Central City and suburbs increased with each sizeable earthquake event. As discussed earlier in this report it affected some of the assessment criteria such as legibility, as cornerstone buildings were demolished and the associated level of legibility, particularly within the smaller B1 zones, declined.

With the advent of the earthquakes the Central City business zones component was removed from the scope of works because the draft Central City Plan (CCP) was initiated and consequently developed. However the report remains applicable to the B2 and B1 district and local centres.

The *Urban Design Technical Report* further built on the previous research work undertaken, and evaluated the urban design qualities of sample locations in Business 1, 2 and 2P Zones throughout Christchurch, with a focus on the scale of the street and individual sites. This was on the premise that the city's quality depends on the cumulative effect of multiple developments, as well as broader scale urban planning. An aggregate score was provided as an overall measure of urban quality.

5.2.1 Technical Assessment Criteria

The criteria for the *Urban Design Technical Report* evaluation used to assess the sample developments were:

- Building design and appearance including: façade articulation and diversity; material use, quality and composition; character and identity; colour and signage and; roof lines
- Street scene (interface) including: street edge continuity and definition; corner articulation; street boundary landscaping; display windows/façade opening; visibility and legibility of entrances; active edges/range of edges
- Relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces: height and scale; building form and bulk; materials and colour; heritage and special character
- Pedestrian connectivity and access including: circulation and permeability; barrier free access to and around buildings; pedestrian safety and comfort; pedestrian gathering areas/public open space
- Car parking and access including: location of car parking; associated landscaping; driveways; loading service and functions.

5.2.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

The general conclusion of the *Urban Design Technical Report* was that there was a concentration of developments of low or moderately low urban quality, in relation to the criteria, in the city centre fringe areas, particularly to the south and south east of the city, and in some of the more suburban locations. The *Technical Report* also identified that good design outcomes are readily achievable as existing examples located in Christchurch illustrate.

The overall observations, conclusions and recommendations were consistent with the previous research and consultation work undertaken, with some additions. These included, in addition to City Plan rules and assessment matters, the option to adopt City Plan policies to address:

- Building design and appearance
- Street interface
- Relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces
- Pedestrian access and amenity
- Car parking and vehicle access

In addition it was recommended that new developments within the Business 1, 2 and 2P zones have a discretionary activity status with respect to urban design quality, with supporting assessment criteria, as stated earlier.

The recommendations also included using the Urban Design Panel to appraise the urban design quality of applications with respect to the assessment criteria referred to above.

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Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

6.0 Urban Design Issues

As stated previously, the same urban design issues have continued to be consistently identified in the Business 1 and 2 zones through the various research and consultation phases, including initiatives such as the Suburban Centres Masterplan Programme. A précis of these issues follows:

- The generic built quality of district and neighbourhood centres, with little reflection of the historic grain, pattern of development and identity of the locale
- Lack of recognition of human scale and comfort, with large scale monolithic forms and car-based rather than pedestrian focused site layouts
- Poor quality interface between public space and the private realm
- Lack of vitality and activity , particularly at the street edge and over longer periods of the day and night
- Poor accessibility (poor linkages and loss of opportunity for walking and cycling)
- Adverse visual and physical impacts of vehicle access and parking
- Lack of recognition of principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in site layout, building design and in relation to the overall context of the site
- Lack of recognition of relationships with neighbouring developments, including character, scale, site design, connectivity, grain and architectural detailing
- Poor quality building and materials and lack of detailing and visual engagement
- Impact of large scale signage and branding
- Lack of recognition of environmental design in the site and building design
- Poor level of amenity within the development overall.

There is a very strong connection between the quality of the built environment and the economic, social and environmental success of a place, as identified by *The Value of Urban Design* and more recent urban design and health research.

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 Principal Advisor – Urban Design
 Strategy and Planning Group

7.0 Options for Resolution

7.1 The following options are proposed:

Option 1: Retain the status quo

Option 2: City Plan changes to the Business 1 and 2 zones

2A. Adopt policies addressing:

- Building design and appearance
- Street interface
- Relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces
- Pedestrian access and amenity
- Car parking and vehicle access

2B. Adopt a restricted activity status for urban design, amenity and appearance in Business 1 and 2 zones.

2C. Develop new rules to address the matters above, with accompanying assessment matters.

Option 3: Add Business 1 zone developments for appraisal to the Urban Design Panel *Terms of Reference* (Business 2 developments are already included).

Option 4: Provide non statutory design guidance to accompany the assessment matters.

7.2 Option/Issue Analysis

<i>Options</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>			<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Issues</i>	<i>Retain status quo</i>	<i>City Plan changes to the Business 1 and 2 zones</i>			<i>Add Business 1 zone developments to the Urban Design Panel terms of reference for appraisal</i>	<i>Assessment matters and non statutory design guidance</i>
		<i>2A. Adopt new policies</i>	<i>2B. Restricted activity status</i>	<i>2C. New rules and assessment matters</i>		
<i>Generic built quality</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Recognition of human scale</i>	In part	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Quality of the public/private interface</i>	In part	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Accessibility</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Vehicle access and parking</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>CPTED</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Neighbourhood context</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Quality of building and</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

J F J Schroder
Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

<i>materials</i>						
<i>Recognition of environmental design</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	In part	Yes
<i>Level of amenity</i>	In part	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The urban issues identified in this report are many and varied. Furthermore the process and approaches to the design of a proposal can also be many and varied. The proposed options, bar the status quo, could potentially address the issues but to varying degrees. This depends to a large degree on the level of specificity of the option i.e. a rule, but perhaps more importantly the level of discussion that may be held through the development of the design. This can allow greater flexibility, while achieving a better and agreed design outcome.

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J F J Schroder
Principal Advisor – Urban Design
Strategy and Planning Group

8.0 Conclusions

The urban design issues outlined within the various reports and research reviewed for this work continue to be as relevant today in the Business 1 and 2 zones and they were when first defined in 2008. With the advent of the 2010/2011 earthquakes and the loss of built form in the City's commercial areas, as well as the opportunities this then provides, the design quality of the commercial centres appears to have become even more important to the business owners and the local communities that they service. This indicates that a desirable course of action is to ensure options which effectively address the design and layout issues, rather than remaining with the status quo.

With regard to the options, they too appear to have been consistently identified, with the exception of financial incentives. These were an option in the 2008 work but were dismissed as a result of consultation. There is no clear indication of why financial incentives were not more generally acceptable in the review of consultation. However, as a result of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes Christchurch's current fiscal situation is stretched, as is that of ratepayers generally. As such financial incentives for good design would potentially be difficult to justify.

8.1 Recommendation

It is recommended that Option 2 – 4, including 2A, 2B and 2C, noted in the options above be adopted to provide a robust framework for ensuring higher quality urban design.

The package of tools provides complementary approaches, including the opportunity to engage with property owners/developers and their agents, potentially adding greater value to their projects by providing additional design expertise. The package of tools would also ensure that there is a level of certainty about the expectations for the B1 and B2 zones by providing design guidance supporting alternative design approaches.

Appendix A. SITE SURVEY RESULTS

Urban Design Technical Report
Plan Change 56

August 2011

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I. Background

This report compiles the results of the urban design site assessments conducted for 36 properties within the Business 1, Business 2 and Business 2 Parking zones of Christchurch City. The information from the GIS site analysis exercise is also included for reference. The survey information was collected on 10, 11, 17 and 18 of November 2010 and 30 June and 4 July 2011. The surveyors were David Irwin, Gavin Lister and Wade Robertson.

II. Surveyed Properties

The following 36 sites were assessed (shown below sorted by plan zone):

- **Business 1 (Local Centre):**

- 135 Colombo Street, Beckenham
- Corner Colombo & Somerfield Street, Beckenham
- 148 Colombo Street, Beckenham
- Corner Colombo & Strickland Street, Beckenham
- 140 Colombo Street, Beckenham
- Corner Main Road & Marriner Street, Sumner
- 30 Marriner Street, Sumner
- Corner Nayland Street & Wakefield Avenue, Sumner
- 42 Nayland Street, Sumner
- 221 Linwood Avenue, Linwood
- 225 Linwood Avenue, Linwood
- Corner Linwood Road & Buckleys Road, Linwood
- 9 Buckleys Road, Linwood
- 301 Lincoln Road, Addington
- 297 Lincoln Road, Addington
- 283 Lincoln Road, Addington
- 261 Lincoln Road, Addington
- 70-72a Riccarton Road, Riccarton
- 74 Riccarton Road, Riccarton
- 92 Riccarton Road, Riccarton
- 94 Riccarton Road, Riccarton
- 192 Papanui Road, Merivale
- 176-180 Papanui Road, Merivale
- 175 Papanui Road, Merivale
- 217-223 Papanui Road, Merivale

- **Business 2 (District Centre):**

- Avonhead Mall (cnr Withells Road and Merrin Street)
- Woolston Village Shopping Centre
- 92 Wilsons Road South (New World)
- 42 Marriner Street
- 60 Queenspark Drive
- Bush Inn Centre - 20 Waimairi Road
- Westfield Mall - Riccarton Road
- The Hub - Hornby
- Northlands Mall - 55 Main North Road

- **Business 2P (District Centre - Parking):**

- The Palms - Marshland Road
- Eastgate Mall - cnr Cranley Street and Linwood Avenue

III. Site Assessment Criteria

The site assessment criteria was developed by the Project Team and is documented in a report titled *Development of the Assessment Criteria for Site Survey Work*, December 2009. The survey tool is shown in the following pages.

Site Assessment Criteria

1. Building design and appearance

Criteria	Description	Rating				
		LOW	LOW-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-HIGH	HIGH
A] Façade articulation and diversity	<i>High quality architectural detailing and proportional arrangement of windows and doors provides human scale, visual interest, variety and rhythm to the building facade, rather than blank walls and flat planes. Articulation includes solid and void created by openings in the building, and functional features such as verandahs, canopies and balconies. These features should strengthen building character, prioritise street frontage and create a diverse and interesting street condition.</i>	Blank walls and surfaces at ground level. Lack of architectural detailing, and no functional features	Some architectural detailing for primary frontage, low percentage of openings (doors and windows) or small openings in proportion to solid walls. Lack of articulation and detailing for all other visible street frontages	Articulation and architectural detailing at ground level for primary and secondary frontages, with articulation lacking at upper levels in prominent public view.	Architectural detailing and functional features at ground level and upper levels for all visible primary and secondary frontages.	Appropriate and consistent architectural detailing and functional features at ground and upper levels, and a high proportion of windows and openings which help to break a large façade into smaller human scale units. Priority given to articulation of primary frontage, with detailing and openings for secondary frontages.
B] Material use, quality and composition	<i>The selection and composition of appropriate materials and colours for the external walls and roof, to provide texture, pattern and visual interest to the building, as well as the quality and durability of those materials, particularly at ground level. The use of local materials contributes to local character. Where appropriate, detailing specific to heritage values should be included.</i>	Excessive use of multiple clashing materials and colours, and/or poor quality materials (may be evidence of material failure). Inappropriate use of a material in relation to architectural form and compositional theme.	Incoherent composition. No hierarchy applied in use of materials colour, pattern, texture, and no relationship to building form and compositional theme.	A variety of materials with different modular patterns, textures, contrast and colour variation. Clear hierarchy applied in use of materials.	A cohesive mix of high quality materials with a hierarchy of colours, texture and modular patterns applied to provide variety depth and relief to the building façade, in keeping with building form	A cohesive mix of high quality materials, with a hierarchy of colour, texture and 3D relief to provide variety, rhythm and visual richness. Use of local materials and any distinctive heritage patterns to contribute to character.
C] Building character and identity	<i>The building style and its architectural features are distinctive and reflect and enhance the local character, heritage and identity of the urban environment (includes response to streetscape character and the wider neighbourhood). Modifications to existing buildings should have a compositional and proportional relationship with the existing building and reinforce its identity.</i>	Building has no distinctive character or design coherence. Building conflicts with surrounding buildings, and is incongruous in terms of scale and character	Building character is inappropriate e.g. historicist reconstructions and facadism, roofline not appropriate to building character and form	Building character does not conflict with neighbouring buildings or detract from heritage buildings, but is not particularly distinctive	Building character is distinctive and appropriate within street or local precinct, roofline is appropriate to building character and form	Building has a distinctive character that makes a positive contribution to the distinct identity and unique environment of Christchurch City.
D] Colour and signage	<i>The extent to which the use of corporate colour and signage for advertising/ brand recognition is appropriate in a street context. Applies to the external walls and roof of a building.</i>	Excessive use of bright colours and/ or bold signage has a negative impact on neighbouring buildings and the street	Use of bold colours and or bold signage detracts from street character or heritage buildings	Restrained use of colour and signage, with only minor impact on neighbouring buildings	Colour and signage is in keeping with the scale of the building and character of the street	Colour and signage contributes positively to the scale and presence of the building in its street context
E] Building roofline	<i>The extent to which a roofline meets the sky with variety and interest and the contribution roof forms provide to the perceived height and bulk of buildings. In particular large format, low rise buildings should have a modulated roof plane relating to the underlying building form</i>	No variation in roofline for large format buildings, or excessive variation in roofline that impacts on the skyline in citywide views or detracts from the form of heritage buildings	Minor or arbitrary variation in roofline, which bears minimal relation to overall form	Flat or pitched roofline appropriate to bulk and proportion of building	Flat or pitched roofline that provides some visual relief to large building mass, providing shape and visual rhythm.	Flat or pitched roofline that emphasizes key architectural features, integrates service structures, modulates large format buildings, and is recognizable for its distinctive silhouette.
F] Sustainable design and energy efficiency	<i>The building is environmentally responsive and displays application of passive solar design principles, including orientation to the north, use of shading structures, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency, and other applied mechanisms such as solar collectors.</i>	Site observation comments only- noting any evidence of visible features (rating not applicable)				

Site Assessment criteria

2. Street scene

Criteria	Description	Rating				
		LOW	LOW-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-HIGH	HIGH
A] Street edge continuity and definition	<i>The continuity of the building line along the street edge contributes to the visual containment and sense of enclosure along the street, with buildings sited to give priority to primary and secondary street frontages. Enclosure relates to the combination of building setback and street façade height. The siting of new buildings should establish a positive precedent for new development. An important landmark building with a civic function may be an exception where quality public space is provided to the street edge.</i>	No street edge continuity, i.e. carpark along street frontage results in building being set to rear of the site, and / or large and random edge setback not in keeping with other buildings in the street, and the characteristic block and street layout of the surrounding area.	Partial or disrupted street edge continuity with vehicle entrances and car parks along street frontage (greater than 1 car park aisle depth with two rows of parking), and wide setback with low building height	Building setback in keeping with general pattern and coherence of street edge definition, with partial street edge continuity equal to or less than 60% (approx) of street frontage (Setback may allow for one or two rows of parking where appropriate to the street context and building function)	Building setback kept to a minimum with street edge continuity of between 60% and 80% (approx) of total primary street frontage. The siting of a new building reflects the characteristic street layout of the surrounding area.	Building is sited to address the primary and secondary street edge, with any setbacks in keeping with street context. Continuous street frontage of greater than 80% (approx). Walkable street created through compact built form, continuous edge and human scale.
B] Corner articulation	<i>A combination of building form, height, setback and articulation to address prominent street corners and contribute to urban form and legibility. The continuity of the street frontage alignment should generally be maintained and emphasized at the street intersection.</i>	No built form on corner, i.e. significant building setback or car park on corner	Weak built form on corner, e.g. low height and large setback not in keeping with the street context.	Building addresses corner with minimised setback	Building addresses corner with increased height and minimised setback	Building designed to address corner. It may include increased height, reduced setback, entrances and architectural detailing to create a legible urban landmark.
C] Street boundary landscaping	<i>The positioning and quality of boundary landscaping fulfills its intended function, i.e. contributes to the attractiveness and coherence of the street, screens car parks and service areas, provides separation and amenity for high traffic volume streets, and softens built form. These functions are balanced with the need to retain sightlines and surveillance for pedestrian safety.</i>	No boundary landscaping provided where landscaping would be appropriate (i.e. a wide setback), or continuous dense planting and/ or high walls or fences screening pedestrian views along the boundary	Low planting used where tall planting or trees would be more in keeping with the scale of the building or depth of setback. Predominantly dense planting, or isolated and sporadic planting.	Boundary landscaping and tree/shrub planting provided that has little or no contribution to the overall character and amenity of the street.	Continuous tree planting and low underplanting maintaining pedestrian views for safety and passive surveillance, but screening service areas and car parking.	No landscaping where landscaping is inappropriate (such as on the perimeter of most Central City blocks), or an appropriate landscape scheme that contributes positively to the character and amenity of the street. Species appropriate to local conditions included.
D] Display windows/ façade openings	<i>The number and proportion of façade openings (i.e. doors and windows) provides good passive surveillance, overlooking and interaction at ground level for pedestrian safety and amenity, and deters graffiti and vandalism. Balconies and other features for upper stories also contribute to overlooking in the central city, particularly mixed use sites. Buildings that have more than one significant street edge should have secondary building frontages with display windows and façade openings. This may also apply to buildings fronting a carpark (and/ or with a double frontage to a street)</i>	No display windows or façade openings e.g. blank façade to street or car park, or non-transparent windows with no overlooking.	Limited façade openings, i.e. less than 20% of the front façade has transparent windows. (All percentages estimated for the total frontage if a building or building site has multiple street frontages)	Between 20% and 30% (approx) of the front façade has transparent windows and façade openings,	Between 30% and 40% (approx) of the front façade has well proportioned transparent windows at eye level, providing effective overlooking and passive surveillance during the day	High number of well proportioned façade openings (i.e. greater than 40% (approx) of the building façade) evenly distributed across primary and secondary frontages, providing effective passive surveillance and pedestrian interaction during the day and at night. Proportional sections of glazing are separated by other materials to ensure façade articulation.
E] Visibility and legibility of entrances	<i>The extent to which building entrances are visible to pedestrians, accessible with no barriers, aligned with sightlines and desire lines, and contribute to pedestrian activity and safety. Buildings that have more than one significant street edge should provide secondary entrances. Features such as verandahs and canopies denote entrances.</i>	No entrance to building from front or logical front to building	Secondary entrance from logical front of building with no direct pedestrian access to street. (This may apply to a building entrance from a car park).	A main entrance at the logical front of the building with a pedestrian connection to the street	A logical hierarchy to entrances, with main entrance to main frontage and secondary entrance to secondary frontage, with pedestrian connection to the street	A legible main entrance at the front of the building, visible and connected with a direct and barrier free pedestrian connection to the street. Features are used for entrance definition and shelter.
F] Active edges/ range of activities	<i>A diverse range of activities contributing to street life, vitality and interest, pedestrian safety and enjoyment at ground level. Includes diverse functions, multiple entrances and openings, narrow frontages, display windows, day and night time activities. Primary and secondary frontages should be activated.</i>	No activity at street level, i.e. blank façade/ monotonous frontage or carpark, large units with few or no doors, no visible variation of function.	Larger units with few doors at street level (1-2 units every 100m), little diversity of functions, limited street level engagement. On larger sites, may include a small proportion of attractive frontages.	Mixture of small and larger units (2-5 units every 100m), with some diversity of functions and only a few closed or passive units. Poor detailing.	Narrow shop frontages (5- 10 units every 100m) providing some diversity of functions and relief in frontages with good detailing.	Active street frontages with small units (10 – 15 units every 100m), with a diverse range of publicly relevant activities that are attractive to pedestrians. No closed or passive units.

Site Assessment criteria

3. Relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces

Criteria	Description	Rating	LOW	LOW-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-HIGH	HIGH
A] Height and scale	<i>The perception of height and transition in scale, to achieve a comfortable relationship between buildings and a positive contribution to urban form along the street (taking into consideration the wider context). A building that extends above the threshold established by the predominant height in the area will have greater impact on its neighbours, and a building that is significantly lower than its neighbours can interrupt street coherence. Building height should be moderated at the street edge and common boundary, and a scale transition between higher and lower buildings may be achieved by step-backs at upper levels.</i>	Abrupt and significant change in height (more than 3 storeys) that results in adverse effects on neighbouring buildings and/or adjacent public space (e.g. visual dominance, shading and wind effects).	Significant change in height (more than 2 storeys) with no techniques employed to moderate height and scale transition to adjoining building, or to moderate height and scale from the street edge. Significant disruption to street edge continuity and vertical elevation from one building to the next.	Significant change in height (more than 2 storeys) to neighbouring building but with some elevation step-backs at upper levels designed to assist with transition between buildings and reduce visual dominance from the street. Physical separation from neighbouring building may apply here as an alternative technique.	Minimal difference in height to neighbouring buildings (between 1 and 2 storeys), generally in keeping with building scale and rhythm of façade elevation along the street, and avoiding visual dominance. Alternatively if the building height is more than a third taller than the height of buildings on neighbouring sites, the taller portion of the building occupies only one-half to two-thirds of the overall building footprint.	Gradual transition in height (no more than one storey where the neighbouring building is four storeys or less) providing a positive contribution to vertical elevation and rhythm along the street. Alternatively if the building height is more than a third taller than the height of buildings on neighbouring sites, the taller portion of the building occupies only one-half to two-thirds of the overall building footprint.	
B] Building form and bulk	<i>The overall perception of a building's mass and bulk relative to its surroundings to achieve a positive scale relationship with adjoining buildings and public spaces (taking into consideration the wider context). For taller buildings or buildings with a large floor plate, this requires modulation of building volume into secondary blocks or units that are stepped in plan (i.e. building line variation) and elevation. This creates a finer grain of building form and patterning sympathetic to neighbouring buildings, and relating to human scale at street level. Generally a narrower facade width is desirable (i.e. a frontage with many small units and openings to the street).</i>	Overall perception of solid mass and bulk to the building that is disproportionate and has an adverse effect on neighbouring buildings i.e. monolithic proportion (may be greater than 50% taller than immediate neighbours or floor plate is 2 or 3 times the size of other buildings).	Continuous building line with monotonous façade treatment contributing to overall 'massiveness' of the building, not in keeping with the scale and form of neighbouring buildings. Wide roads with tree avenues may assist with reducing the perception of large form and bulk by providing significant separation to neighbouring buildings.	Building form and bulk is generally in keeping with, or improves on the scale of neighbouring buildings by narrowing façade widths or giving the appearance of smaller units through building form modulation and articulation.	Building form is modulated with secondary transitional volumes, projecting and recessive elements, and building line variation, and is in keeping with (or improves on) the form and grain of neighbouring buildings. This may include wrapping larger format developments with retail units of a narrower width.	A coherent building pattern that contributes to the amenity of neighbouring buildings and enhances diversity at street level. Building form is modulated into human scale components and frontage widths or patterning at street level that complements (or improves on) the scale, form and amenity of neighbouring buildings.	
C] Materials and colour	<i>The selection and composition of appropriate materials and colours (as for building design and appearance) in a way that recognizes context but does not visually compete with neighbouring buildings or attempt to replicate them in a way that detracts from the amenity of both buildings and the street.</i>	Use of a single material, or excessive use of multiple materials and colours that clash with neighbouring buildings and detract from the overall street amenity	A bland and monotonous material and colour palette that detracts from the amenity of neighbouring buildings	A restrained material and colour palette that does not compete with or detract from the amenity of neighbouring buildings	A balanced mix of high quality materials, texture and colour variation that does not compete with or detract from the amenity of neighbouring buildings.	A considered material and colour palette that enhances the building and contributes to the amenity of neighbouring buildings and the street.	
D] Heritage and special character	<i>The relationship between a new development and a neighbouring historically significant building or heritage area (may be scheduled heritage building, or a building/ group of buildings with special character), or an adjoining public space such as a park with historic significance. Requires a respectful design response demonstrated through sympathetic building form, rhythm, scale, and detailing.</i>	Excessive height, bulk and scale of new building has an adverse visual impact on neighbouring historically significant building. May have inappropriate historicist reconstruction (i.e. an attempt to replicate style and appearance)	Awkward juxtaposition between new taller building and older low rise building with historical significance, or awkward juxtaposition in form, design, detailing and appearance.	New building demonstrates a neutral response and is neither offensive nor complementary to neighbouring building	New building has regard to historically significant building, and is sympathetic in form, rhythm, scale and detailing.	New building complements (but does not necessarily replicate) neighbouring historically significant building. May be innovative and contemporary in design while still relating to context and neighbouring buildings.	

Note: A contrast in building height, form and bulk may be appropriate for buildings with an important public function, provided that a human scale is retained at street level.

Site Assessment criteria

4. Pedestrian connectivity and access

Criteria	Description	Rating				
		LOW	LOW-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-HIGH	HIGH
A] Circulation and permeability	<i>The ability for pedestrians and cyclists (including other wheeled users, such as wheelchairs, prams and mobility scooters) to easily get around the site without the need for excessive wayfinding signage, e.g. pedestrian routes should be aligned with desire lines and sight-lines, and be directly connected to the street and wider pedestrian network. Walking and cycling routes are safe, attractive and convenient. May include the retention and enhancement or creation of new laneways through blocks where they would contribute to pedestrian access and permeability.</i>	No defined pedestrian routes through the site	Pedestrian routes are not legible and are compromised by vehicle movement within the site	A legible pedestrian route is provided between the street and the main entrance, with the assistance of some way-finding measures. Pedestrians and cyclists give way to vehicles.	Multiple defined pedestrian routes, with a clear hierarchy between main paths with direct access and secondary paths feeding into main paths. Zebra crossings are likely to be provided. Bike stands are provided and are visible/ accessible.	Pedestrian and cycle routes are safe and legible and there is direct and uninterrupted access from the street network to the main entrance. Pedestrian routes through car park areas are well defined and prioritised over traffic movement. Bike stands are visible and accessible and may be covered. Convenient and safe pedestrian thoroughfare may be provided for larger blocks (e.g. laneways).
B] Barrier free access to and around buildings	<i>The absence of obstructions to disabled users, with barrier free design features integrated with main pedestrian routes to and through the site, including pram crossings, ramps, handrails for steps and suitably wide paths for wheelchairs and prams.</i>	Pedestrian access is not barrier free, i.e. disabled users have some difficulty gaining access to the building, and obstacles are difficult to navigate	Barrier free access is not aligned with main pedestrian routes, and requires a circuitous journey to access the building away from sight lines and desire lines	Barrier free access is provided to the building, but is compromised in some locations.	Barrier free access is integrated with the main pedestrian route to the building, and is legible and accessible	Full barrier free access provided to and around buildings along main and secondary pedestrian routes, with additional features to improve access for all users.
C] Pedestrian safety and comfort	<i>The extent to which pedestrian access is safe, attractive and visible from the street with informal surveillance provided by windows and doors overlooking primary pedestrian routes, shopfront spill lighting and pedestrian lighting at night, and protection against climatic conditions, e.g. verandahs over footpaths.</i>	Pedestrian access is not visible from the street, with no informal surveillance and no lighting. Appears to be unsafe and may invite graffiti and vandalism.	Pedestrian access is direct and visible from the street but lacks informal surveillance, lighting and shelter and has the perception of being unsafe at any time of day.	Pedestrian access is direct and visible from the street, with informal surveillance but lacks lighting and shelter and has the perception of being unsafe at night.	Pedestrian access is direct and visible from the street, with informal surveillance and night lighting. Likely to have continuous verandah coverage along the street edge where there is no building setback.	Pedestrian routes are legible, safe, attractive and well used, with high quality design and pedestrian amenity, good surveillance and night lighting, and shelter/ protection from climatic conditions.
D] Pedestrian gathering areas/ public open space	<i>Provision for attractively landscaped public spaces within development sites for seating and gathering, preferably related to public transport (e.g. bus stops), and building entrances. Public spaces should contribute to the character and identity of the site and the street.</i>	No provision for public spaces or landscaped areas, or the possibility of public space is not recognized and utilised- particularly in relation to public transport stops.	Small but functional public space provided for seating, but not oriented to receive sun and not located for good surveillance and association with other street activities and/ or public places	Shared public space provided within the street or nearby open space	Functional and attractive public space relating to building entrances and main walking routes with passive surveillance, and orientated to receive sun at peak use times.	Attractive, safe and high quality landscaped spaces for pedestrians to sit and gather, contributing to the overall character of the street and complementing other existing public spaces. Spaces are orientated to receive sun at peak use times, and may be associated with public transport nodes. Other features may include shelter and bike stands.

Site Assessment criteria

5. Carparking and access

Criteria	Description	Rating				
		LOW	LOW-MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE-HIGH	HIGH
A] Location of car parking	<i>The location of car parking on the site in relation to the primary and secondary street frontages, and in relation to building layout and location so that building setback, street edge continuity, visual amenity and pedestrian access are not compromised by car parking. Car parking should not be visually dominant from the street (i.e. at the rear of buildings and above/ below ground), but at the same time should be integrated and overlooked for surveillance or secured at night for safety.</i>	Vehicles dominate the site and alienate pedestrians. Car parking is located along the entire primary street frontage, with the building set back within the site.	Carparking is located along more than 50% of the primary street frontage or the secondary street frontage, with the building set back away from the street frontage	Car parking partially occupies the primary or secondary street frontage (less than 50%), allowing for more than 50% built form along the street edge. Parking is likely to be equal to or greater than one aisle depth with two rows of car parks where setbacks allow.	Car parking is accessed from a minor/ local street where a secondary street frontage or entrance is possible, allowing the building to present a positive frontage to primary streets with minimal disruption to street edge continuity and setback. Where a small amount of car parking may be visible from the street and is typical in its street context, it is effectively integrated with the site layout and separated by a landscape buffer. Parking is no greater than one aisle depth and two rows of car parks.	There is no car parking on site, or car parking is minimized and not visually dominant from the street, with vehicle access from secondary streets or rear service lanes where possible. Where a small amount of car parking may be visible from the street and is typical in its street context, it is effectively integrated with the site layout and separated by a landscape buffer. Parking along the street frontage in this context is no greater than the depth of one aisle and one row of car parks.
B] Associated landscaping	<i>The location, function and scale of soft landscaping within car parking areas is used to soften the effect of hard surfaces, screen or mitigate service areas and car parking, treat stormwater run-off within the site, and contribute to the visual coherence of the street and pedestrian linkages. Ideally the site exhibits selection of local materials and reduction in impervious surfaces.</i>	No landscaping is provided in car park area	Minimal planting provided within car parking area with some inappropriate species selection (e.g. low height and ineffective, or too large for space constraints and likely to obscure sightlines.	Tree planting and underplanting provided to soften the effect of car parking areas, with sightlines retained for safety and surveillance	Appropriate selection of tree and other plant species for scale and form relative to the scale of the building, reduced maintenance requirements and suitability to site conditions	Effective planting which contributes positively to the overall amenity of the site and consistency and coherence along the street, and provides a sustainable means of treating stormwater run-off from parking areas (e.g. rain gardens, biofiltration swales)
C] Driveways	<i>The location, size and treatment of vehicle entry and exit points to car park areas and parking structures should be integrated in a way that does not compromise the quality of the street edge or the status of the main entry to the building, particularly at the crossing point with footpaths where priority should be given to pedestrians to improve pedestrian access and safety</i>	Driveways are wide, servicing and car park functions dominate the site, and footpath access is eliminated along the site frontage	Driveways create a barrier to footpath access where pedestrian safety and movement is compromised	Driveway widths and turning radii are reduced, and safety measures are in place for pedestrians	Driveways are designed so that vehicles give way to pedestrians.	There is no vehicle access to the site, or a single narrow driveway is provided with the footpath taking precedence over the driveway (in terms of levels and materials)
D] Loading and service functions	<i>Servicing and loading functions should be integrated on site in a way that does not compromise the quality of the street edge or the main entrance to the building</i>	Loading areas and/ or service areas (including rubbish storage) are located at the front of the building and are visually obtrusive	Loading and/ or service functions compromise pedestrian access and are visually obtrusive	Service functions are screened and visually unobtrusive. Loading functions do not compromise pedestrian access	Loading and/ or service functions are away from the main entrance and primary street frontage and are effectively screened	Loading and/ or service functions are not visible from the street edge or public spaces

Site Assessment criteria

Existing Typologies 1: street based

Typologies are grouped by building form in relation to the street. There are two main typologies, street based and car based.

The sub-types for street based are:

- 1. Narrow frontage
- 2. Wide frontage
- 3. Laneway

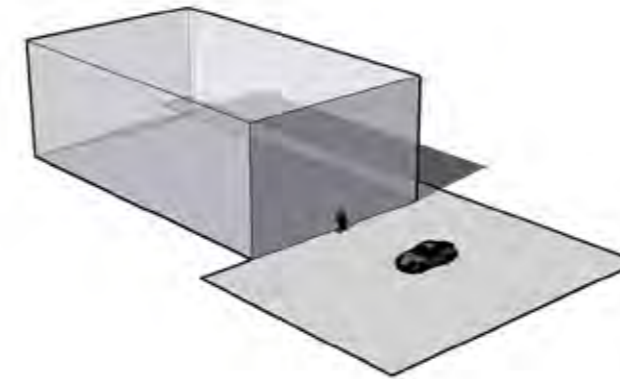
Street based typology : characteristics

- Entrance condition:** Street based (directly onto primary street frontage)
- Urban form:** Compact, typically attached frontage
- Function(s):** Typically commercial or mixed use: retail or entertainment at ground level, offices or apartments above
- Height:** Typically up to 5 storeys, but may exceed this and be within permitted height range (e.g. mixed use with apartments)
- Typical to zones:** CC_EF, CC_F1, CC_C, B1
- Street condition:** Likely to have reasonable pedestrian activity even if roads are wide and traffic dominated.
- Other conditions:** Adaptive reuse of heritage building
- Considerations:** Dual frontage, sympathetic height / form relating to a) scale of laneway and b) heritage building.

Note: Typologies are based on existing conditions assessed from GIS desktop analysis work. New typologies for improved urban form are not included in this package.

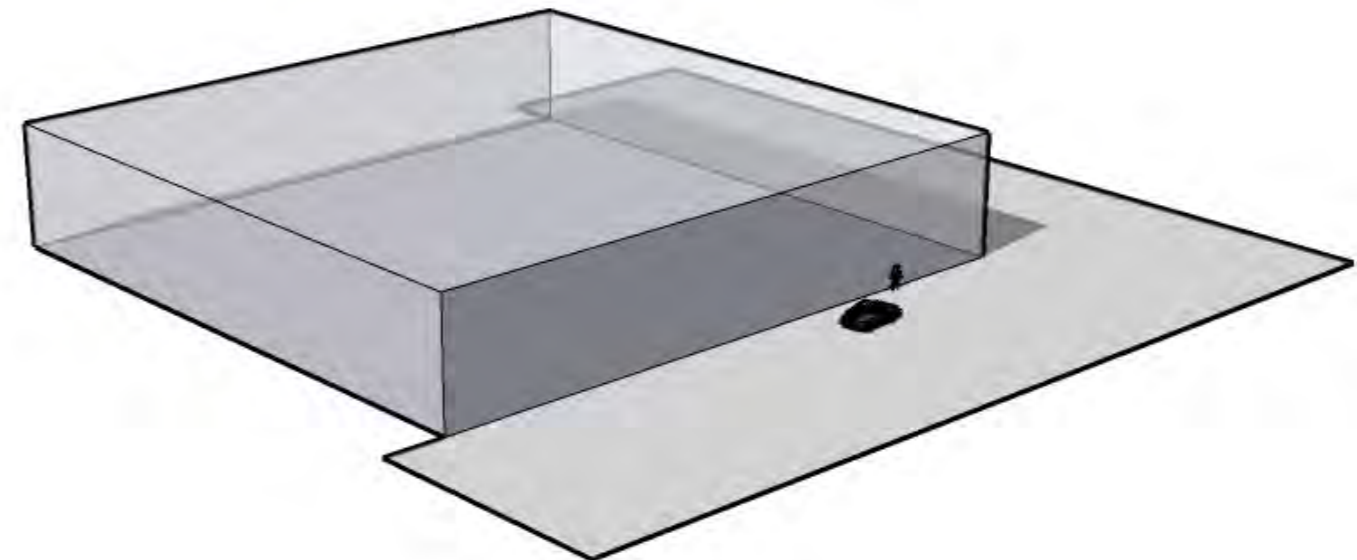
1. Narrow frontage

- Narrow continuous frontage to street
- May have service lane to side or rear



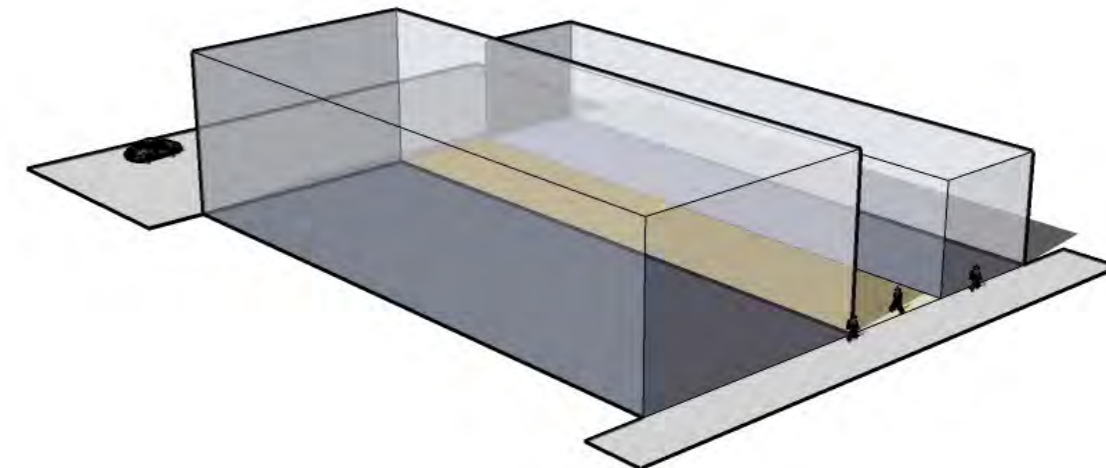
2. Wide frontage

- Wide continuous frontage to street
- May be corner site with more than one street frontage
- May have underground parking or parking to rear (not visible from street)



3. Laneway

- Pedestrian laneway / thoroughfare link.
- Buildings front the main street and also the laneway.



Site Assessment criteria

Existing Typologies 2: car based

Typologies are grouped by building form in relation to the street. There are two main typologies, street based and car based.

The sub-types for car based are:

1. Car court
2. Car park to street edge
3. Perimeter parking
4. Retail Shopping Mall

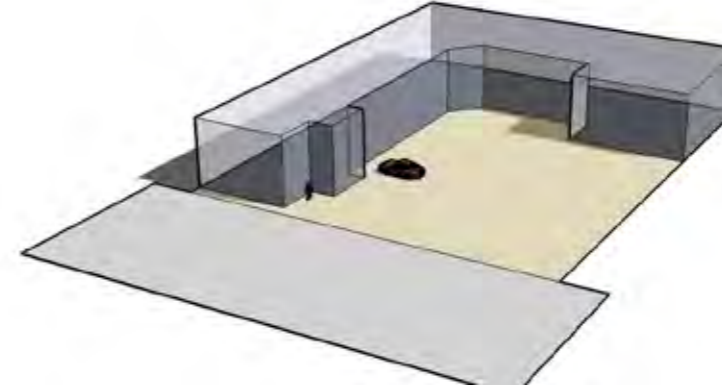
Car based typology : characteristics

- Entrance condition:** Access to building from (or through) car park
- Urban form:** Typically detached frontage, larger sites with setback from street edge.
- Function(s):** Ranges from light industrial /service related, to big box retail, malls and supermarkets.
- Height:** Typically low rise (1 to 3 storeys)
- Typical to zones:** B3, B2, CC_CS
- Street condition:** Typically on wide, high traffic volume streets with reduced pedestrian foot traffic
- Considerations:** Positioning of building and carparking on site, particularly in relation to corner, viability of active edges at street level given low pedestrian counts and building type.

Note: Typologies are based on existing conditions assessed from GIS desktop analysis work. New typologies for improved urban form are not included in this package.

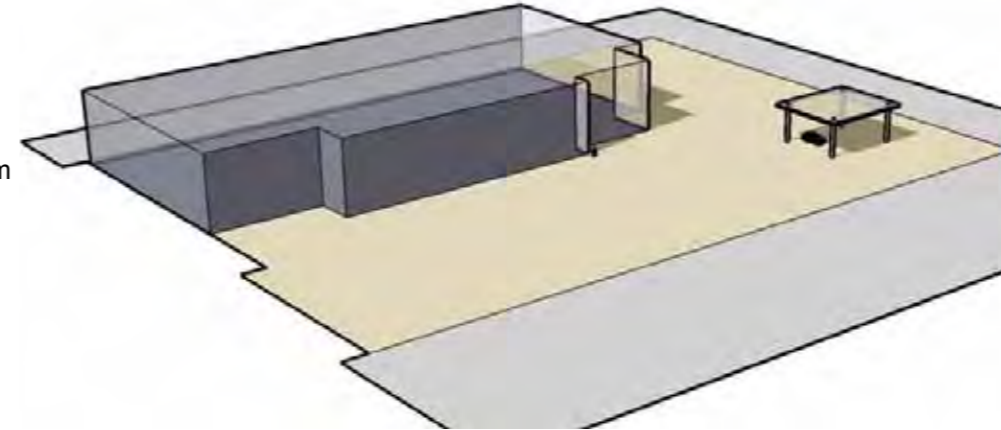
1. Car court

- Building entrance from car park
- Building to rear of site with minimal street frontage



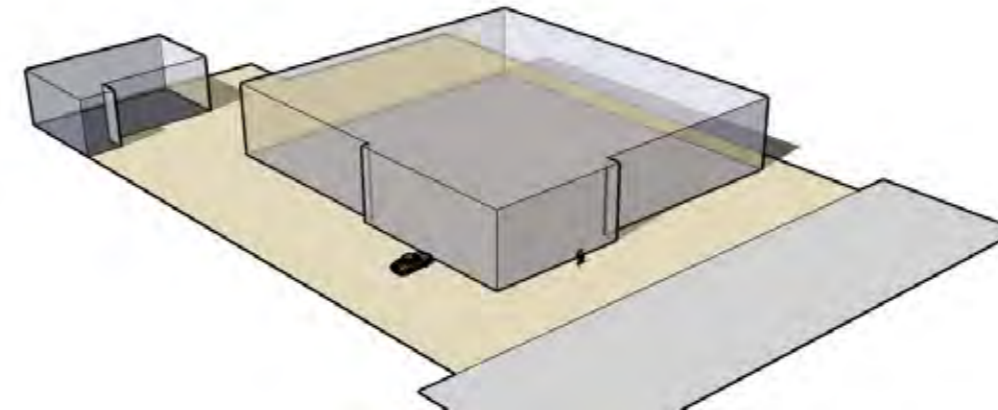
2. Car park to street edge

- Large format (may be a whole block)
- Multiple vehicle entry points to car park
- Access to building predominantly from car park
- Building may also have access from one street edge



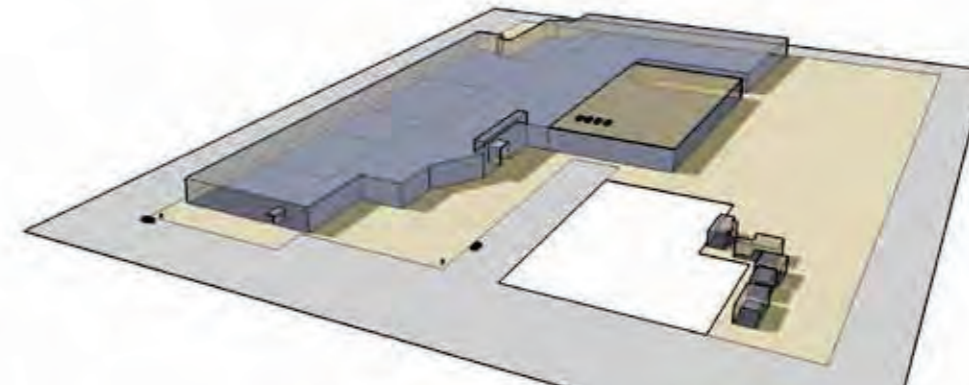
3. Perimeter parking

- Large format
- Car parking and vehicular access around perimeter of site, including service vehicle access
- No more than one or two rows of parking to primary street frontage



4. Retail shopping mall

- Large format
- Car parking and vehicular access from attached, adjacent or rooftop car park
- Shops are accessed through common entrances
- Shops are internally oriented along enclosed pedestrian corridors



Site assessment criteria exclusions

A number of exclusions from the site assessment criteria were discussed at the workshop with BECA co-authors and Council Staff on the 9th December as follows, and are reflected in the final version of the site assessment criteria:

- Design integrity and coherence (i.e. the building is greater than a sum of its parts) and relationship to context are overarching principles that apply to all objectives.
- Height to width ratios are not used for assessing enclosure and street definition (i.e. relationship between street width, setbacks and building heights) as this should be addressed in quantitative controls.
- Adaptive re-use of heritage buildings, modification/ conversions and versatility of buildings not included (difficult to assess with UD criteria and will be covered by separate plan change).
- Mixed use and residential in the central city not specifically included for assessment criteria as not generic to all business zones. If included would consider other factors such as: visual privacy, outlook, demarcation between public and private spaces, natural light and ventilation.
- The ability to meet requirements for active edges etc may be reduced on noisy, car dominated streets with high traffic volumes and low pedestrian foot traffic. However alternative design solutions for these environments may compensate (e.g. setbacks and quality landscaping, articulation etc).
- Laneways- identity and intimacy through built form, quality and human scale. Not generic to all business zones therefore not included as separate criteria. Guidelines and other methods such as public/ private partnership may be most effective controls.
- Designs that reinforce special areas - with open space network and hierarchy of streets made distinctive through built form, quality and scale. Some special areas identified in the Central City Revitalisation Strategy, but character is not specifically defined. Includes public spaces, distinctive streetscapes and heritage character (as described in 'Public Space, Public Life').
- Climatic conditions- e.g. sun/ shading, wind effects etc should be addressed through other quantitative requirements in the District Plan e.g. recession planes, height, setbacks etc.
- Sustainable Design and Energy Efficiency excluded from Building Design and Appearance (left as a grey box) – too difficult for site assessments.
- Substantive form of development (i.e. height, bulk, location, setback etc) already appropriately controlled in the District Plan (or will be amended to achieve desired outcomes e.g. Central City South Plan Change or through District Plan review) and is not included unless these measures relate to 'scale of human perception'.
- Site assessment criteria focused on looking at whether there is a positive relationship with the neighbouring building, local context etc. However this does not address the scenario that the neighbouring building may be a poor example or the site may be predominantly car parking.
- A contrast in building form, bulk and height may be appropriate for buildings with an important public function. Exceptions may be justified but are not specifically addressed in the criteria.

Field Observations

- Assessments were influenced by the local context.
- In some cases malls were scored separately (e.g. external vs internal features). This was due to their size and complexity.
- A fourth streets-based typology was added - *Retail Shopping Mall*.
- Malls were considered with a wider context due to their more regional significance.
- Generally the site assessment criteria and associated descriptions for each rating were found to be replicable and transferable across each of the zones although some amendments were noted where exceptions occurred.
- Two people doing assessments together on site ensures results are moderated and robust. Any other assessment method would require some moderation to eliminate variables and ensure transparency.
- Minor amendments have been made to the site assessment criteria to ensure their relevance to all zones, and to ensure that measurable criteria are attainable in the changing context of each zone.
- Amendments have been made to ensure that suburban malls and car oriented developments can still achieve a score of 5 for street edge continuity. If a setback allows for a row of carparking along the street edge and this is typical of the street and appropriate within the wider context (e.g. wide roads with setbacks), then this site may still be able to score a 5 for street edge continuity if the building line is continuous for greater than 80% of the street frontage.
- Where there are two buildings on site of different character (e.g. 60 Queenspark Drive), the buildings are assessed collectively or individually depending on the worst case scenario for the site.
- Where a site has more than one street frontage, criteria such as '*street edge continuity*' and '*active edges*' are applied to the 'total frontage' comprising all primary and secondary frontages.
- Not all criteria are relevant to all sites, e.g. some sites do not have car parking or are not corner sites.