



New Zealand
Historic Places Trust *Pouhere Taonga*

**SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT
OF
HISTORIC HERITAGE**

Discussion Paper No. 4

**URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC
HERITAGE**



3 August 2007

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Sustainable Management of Historic Heritage Guidelines

Discussion Paper No.4

Urban Design and Historic Heritage

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While the NZHPT acknowledges the contribution of other agencies and organisations, the opinions and views expressed in this guide are those of the NZHPT only.

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The Urban Design Framework

The purpose of the Resource Management Act (RMA) is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources and there is a growing movement to promote the sustainable development of the urban environment as a physical resource.

Design, aesthetics and amenity values are relevant and important considerations under the RMA. As indicated by the High Court, the need for 'coherent and pleasing aesthetics is a prime value in the Act's defining purpose...the Act makes the aesthetic an indispensable concern in every planning regime and for every consent authority.'¹

The New Zealand Government has set sustainable development objectives and a program of action. This program highlights the need to promote sustainable cities.² Generally this sustainable city focus is about 'blue and green issues' such as economic growth, livable and safe environments, energy and water conservation.

The Local Government Act 2002 also provides a framework to promote the sustainable development of urban environments within an approach based on the social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing paradigm.

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol is a non-statutory agreement to promote more successful towns and cities through quality urban design. The vision of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol is 'making New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design'.³

This vision is to be achieved by:

- Creating a national cross-sector commitment to quality urban design.
- Providing a national resource of tools, actions and experiences.
- Setting up partnerships between government, the private sector and professionals.
- Increasing the awareness of quality urban design and demonstrating its value.

At the core of protocol are seven design principles: context, character, choice, connections, creativity, custodianship, and collaboration. The design principle of character includes the concept of 'protecting and managing our heritage, including buildings, places and landscapes.'⁴

The NZHPT became a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol on 16 February 2005.

¹ *Urban Auckland v Auckland City Council*, Judgment of Keane J, CIV 407/04, High Court

² Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Sustainable Development for New Zealand, Programme of Action, January 2003

³ MFE, New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, March 2005

⁴ *ibid*, p 19

Urban Design and Historic Heritage: International Guidance

Urban design and historic heritage issues at the international level have had a close affinity with heritage landscapes. As outlined in Discussion Paper No. 3 of this guidance series, heritage landscapes have been addressed by the UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* (1972), the *Florence Charter* for historic gardens (1982), the *Washington Charter* for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas, the *Natchitoches Declaration on Heritage Landscapes* and the recent ICOMOS *Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas*.⁵

While many of the principles for heritage landscapes apply to urban design, international guidance has been largely developed by national institutions rather than international bodies or conferences.

In Great Britain, English Heritage, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the Prince of Wales' Foundation for the Built Environment, the Department of Communities and Local Government, and the Department for the Environment, Transport, and the Regions (DETR) have been active in developing urban design guidance of relevance to historic heritage. Some key guidance documents include:

- **UK, Department for Communities and Local Government, *Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)*.** These documents are prepared by government to provide statutory guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system. Local authorities must take their contents into account in preparing their development plans. The guidance may also be relevant to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. All the guidance notes are relevant to urban design and the following notes are particularly relevant to historic heritage:

PPG 12 Development Plans (1999)
PPG 15 Planning and the historic environment (1994)
PPG 16 Archaeology and planning (1990)
PPG 19 Outdoor advertisement control (1992)⁶

- **UK, Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions and CABE, *By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice, 2000*** was prepared CABE to provide national guidance on issues relating to the need for better urban design, urban design objectives, standards, and using the planning toolkit.⁷
- **English Heritage, CABE and the Planning Officers Society, *Moving Towards Excellence in Urban Design and Conservation, 2006*** was developed for UK local authorities to promote high standards in the regulation of urban design and conservation activities. The guide encourages local authorities to

⁵ <http://www.international.icomos.org/xian2005/xian-declaration.htm> www.iucn.org

⁶ UK Government, Department for Communities and Local Government, *Planning Policy Guidance Notes*, <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143926>

⁷ UK Government, Department for Environment, Transport and Regions and CABE, *By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice*, London, 2000
<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1145239>

focus on quality outcomes (stewardship, clarity of expectations, consistency of decisions, compliance) and provide an integrated, resourced, managed, influential, accessible and user focused service.⁸

- **English Heritage and CABE, *Building in Context, New Development in Historic Areas*, 2001.** This guide contains a number of case studies to show how new buildings can be developed within historic areas in a manner that is appropriate and promotes quality urban design principles. It promotes a 'right approach' that 'is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed character appraisal.'⁹
- **English Heritage and CABE, *Guidance on Tall Buildings*, March 2003.** This tall buildings guide advocates for a development plan-led approach to managing tall buildings and provides criteria for evaluating tall building proposals.¹⁰
- **The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, *H.R.H The Prince of Wales Affordable Rural Housing Initiative, Creating a Sense of Place: A Design Guide*, February 2006.** This publication was prepared to provide guidance to the appearance, construction and layout of affordable housing designed for villages and small towns.¹¹
- In Australia, the New South Wales Heritage Office (NSW Heritage Office) and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects have published guidance on infill development in the historic environment. This guide provides a set of design criteria (character, scale, form, siting, materials and colour, and detailing) and outlines a number of best practice case studies.¹² The NSW Heritage Office also developed guidance for the identification and protection of heritage curtilages in 1996.¹³

Further guidance has been developed by Heritage Victoria, which deal with a range of urban design and historic heritage topics including heritage areas, new buildings, gardens, parks, and landscapes.¹⁴

⁸ English Heritage, CABE and the Planning Officers Society, *Moving Towards Excellence in Urban Design and Conservation*, 2006: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.00100200500a00g>

⁹ English Heritage and CABE, *Building in Context, New Development in Historic Areas*, 2001, p 5: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/>

¹⁰ English Heritage and CABE, *Guidance on Tall Buildings*, March 2003: http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/#tall_buildings

¹¹ The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, *HRH The Prince of Wales's Affordable Rural Housing Initiative, Creating a Sense of Place: A Design Guide*, February 2006: <http://www.princes-foundation.org/introduction.html>

¹² NSW Heritage Office and RAIA, *Design in Context, Guidelines for Infill Development in the Historic Environment*, June 2005: http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/03_index.htm#A-E

¹³ NSW Heritage Office, *Heritage Curtilages*, 1996: http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/03_index.htm#F-J

¹⁴ Heritage Victoria, *Guidelines for the Assessment of Heritage Planning Applications*: <http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/page.asp?ID=38>

Introducing Urban Design and Heritage Conservation

Urban design transects and relates to the realms of architecture, planning, and heritage conservation. Michael Wilford describes its role as follows:

A clear physical expression of the community's hopes and intentions through the medium of urban design is essential for the communication of a consensus image of the city of the future.¹⁵

This concept of urban design is explained as:

- Urban design is not architecture writ large; rather it is an integrated approach.
- Urban design addresses the public realm, dealing with the structure of development, and the space between buildings. It is about the physical design of the public domain.
- Urban design deals with the design management of development, which includes such aspects as height, massing, scale, creating character and diversity, all in three dimensional forms.
- Urban design helps re-interpret the grain of the city, balancing urban capacity with the fabric of the city using pragmatic, understandable systems and concepts. It is what Bernard Tschumi calls 'part of the vision of the City as a whole, rather than an accumulation of zones and pockets.'
- Urban design is about the enduring principles of 'people friendliness, access, orientation, robustness and sensitivity that enable us to create a 'sense of place'.¹⁶

Much of the theory and framework that informs western views of urban design, architecture, planning, and heritage conservation are sourced from theorists such as John Ruskin, William Morris and William Lethaby who profoundly influenced the English romantic and social reform movements during the 18th and 19th centuries.¹⁷ In simple terms, these theorists were concerned with, in varying degrees:

- Aesthetics of new architecture.
- History and conservation of historic buildings and structures.
- Retention of rural historic and natural landscapes.
- Social reform, and addressing poor 'slum' living conditions.

For example, William Lethaby was one of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts Movement and a close associate of the William Morris circle. He was the first Professor of Design at the Royal

¹⁵ Jon Rowland, 'The Urban Design Process' *Urban Design Quarterly*, Issue 56, October 1995

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ W.R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, The Architectural Press Ltd, 1974; John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, George Allen, Kent (4th Edition), 1883; William Morris, *Architecture, Industry and Wealth*, Longmans, London, 1902; Frederick R. Hiorns, *Town Building in History*, George G. Harrap, London, 1956.

College of Art in London and for forty years worked for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings established in 1877 by William Morris.¹⁸

Reconnecting the disciplines of architecture, planning, and heritage conservation is a key requirement to achieve quality urban design. As advocated, in no uncertain terms, by John Ruskin, there were two key duties:

Respecting national architecture whose importance it is impossible to over-rate; the first, to render the architecture of the day historical, and the second, to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages.¹⁹

This approach was reinforced by Gordon Cullen in the 1960s who questioned the quality of modern planning schemes and outlined a townscape approach which dealt with the whole environment: 'buildings, trees, nature, water, traffic, advertisements, and so on.'²⁰ The townscape approach of Cullen is firmly based on learning from, and reinforcing, the historic urban fabric.²¹

Also as led by Roger Scruton in the contemporary period, urban design is aligned with aesthetics or architecture that is not a question of art but of manners. These 'manners' are found in a number of aesthetic 'constants' of scale, facades, ordering, detail, style, regularity and repetition, vertical order, materials, and perception. These constants mark a return to the principles of classical architecture and the tradition of Western architecture as it existed until the First World War.²²

For this reason, within the urban design framework, the disciplines of heritage conservation, planning, and architecture are not limited to conserving individual buildings or structures, designing buildings, or regulating by zoning – they are concerned about the 'big picture' – about promoting and achieving quality urban environments that may be preserved into the future. Also and importantly, urban design goes beyond mere aesthetics. It is concerned about the city in the whole sense: social, cultural, environmental, and economic matters within the paradigm of sustainable development.²³

Shared agenda: urban design and heritage conservation

Urban design and heritage conservation issues are not limited to dealing with new buildings or alterations in historic areas or the conservation of individual buildings and structures. Urban design is fundamentally an aspect of heritage conservation and visa versa. As outlined by English Heritage, CABE, and the Planning Officers Society in the UK, both urban design and heritage conservation have common objectives:

Urban design and conservation are essential components of an effective planning system. They have the common objective of delivering high quality,

¹⁸ W.R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, The Architectural Press Ltd, 1974

¹⁹ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, George Allen, Kent (4th Edition), 1883, p 178

²⁰ Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape*, Butterworth Architecture, London, 1971, p 8

²¹ For discussion of Cullen's work, see *Urban Design Quarterly*, Issue 52, October 1994

²² Roger Scruton 'Architectural Principles in an Age of Nihilism' Andrew Ballantyne, *What is Architecture?* Routledge, London, p 62. See also Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Architecture*, Methuen & Co Ltd, London, 1979

²³ For a discussion on the relationship of urban design and heritage conservation see *Urban Design Quarterly*, Issue 66, April 1998 which includes topic on urban design and conservation, sustainability, and John Ruskin.

locally distinct and valued built environments. They both recognise that the historic environment is a precious asset that must be conserved for future generations.²⁴

This common objective has developed from a shared conviction in learning from the past to create better contemporary environments. – of adopting a conservation ethic based on the coherence and integration of historical townscapes. This approach is not a new idea and was espoused by Gordon Cullen and Frederick R. Hiorns during the 1950s and 1960s who considered the solution to the problems of 20th Century urban sprawl was the need to develop urban environments based on pre-industrial patterns of settlement.²⁵ The heritage conservation movement in return was influenced by urban design principles. As explained by Alan Stones:

There seems to be a two-way flow of ideas between urban design and conservation. Conservation goes beyond mere building preservation and uses urban design analysis to identify the character of spaces and layouts. In return urban design draws on the knowledge of historic forms and spaces to inspire the creation of new environments.²⁶

Today global economics is also influencing a rethink of existing settlement patterns in relation to building competitive cities As explained by Marcus Spiller, former past president of the Australian Planning Institute:

Indeed the spatial organisations that reflected the long boom no longer make sense. The competitive post-industrial city is likely to have more in common with the urban design conventions of pre 1800 Europe than the cities which have mushroomed over the globe since the industrial revolution rippled out from Great Britain.²⁷

Marcus Spiller provides a summary of the relevant historic urban design conventions now relevant today:

- Walkability.
- A public domain that speaks of the culture and the values of the host city or neighbourhood.
- The vertical integration of functions (active street frontages for trade, civic life and education, upper floors for commerce and housing).
- The ability to reach a wide range of services with minimal risk of delays.
- The opportunity to harness the ‘buzz’ of city life, for its economic as well as social value.²⁸

²⁴ English Heritage, CABE and the Planning Officers Society, *Moving Towards Excellence in Urban Design and Conservation*, 2006 (preface).

²⁵ Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape*, Butterworth Architecture, London, 1971; Frederick R. Hiorns, *Town Building in History*, George G. Harrap, London, 1956

²⁶ Alan Stones, ‘Conservation – An Inspiration’ *Urban Design Quarterly*, Issue 66, April 1998

²⁷ Marcus Spiller, ‘Competitive cities – the role of urban design’ unpublished report to accompany a presentation for the Ministry for the Environment, Urban Design champions workshop, February 2006, p 24

²⁸ *ibid*

Principles for Urban Design and Historic Heritage in New Zealand

Promoting a Sustainable Management approach: Integrating Urban Design and Heritage Conservation into Resource Management Planning

Sustainable management provides the core purpose and principles of New Zealand's resource management system (see Discussion Paper No.1 of this series, Principles and Issues). This framework provides a strong platform to integrate all aspects of urban environmental planning.²⁹ Both urban design and heritage conservation have a critical role to play within the wider planning objectives.

While the legislative framework for an integrated approach is provided by the RMA, Historic Places Act 1993, and the Local Government Act 2002, achieving integration between urban design, heritage conservation, and resource management planning will require internal and external institutional alignments at both central and local government level.

Both in New Zealand and overseas, urban design and heritage conservation services with local authorities have been organised within the one unit. This internal organisation should also provide for integration within the entire organisation:

Urban design and conservation needs to be integrated with other local authority policies, strategies and actions, with other legislation and regulation, and with outside agencies and partner organisations to ensure integrity delivery. They are cross-cutting services and have a major role to play, for example in asset management, highways planning and maintenance, and the development of community strategies.³⁰

Integrating urban design and heritage conservation into resource management planning will involve a range of strategies including:

- Recognising the common objectives and principles of urban design and heritage conservation as achieving a sustainable and valued built environment for present and future generations.
- Enhanced opportunities for collaborative working relationships between urban designers, architects, and heritage conservation professionals.
- The development of urban design and heritage conservation units within central and local governments.
- The integration of urban design and heritage conservation advice and resources within central and local governments. In particular, strong connections are required

²⁹ The need for an integrated national framework is one of the key international principles of sustainable development. See, IUCN, UNEP, WWF, *Caring for the Earth, A Strategy for Sustainable Living*, Gland, Switzerland, October 1991

³⁰ English Heritage, CABE and the Planning Officers Society, *Moving Towards Excellence in Urban Design and Conservation*, 2006 (key issues)

with community planning under the Local Government Act 2002, transport planning, and reserves and amenity planning.

Recognising urban environments of significance to Maori

The historic Maori environment was not limited by the binary divisions of rural and urban. Instead, Maori conceptualised their occupation within the realms of the spiritual world: Ranganui (the sky) and Papatuanuku (the earth). Within this world, Maori occupation patterns were dynamic in response to changes in the environment and social relations. Many archaeological sites provide evidence of Maori occupation that was designed to take advantage of the natural environment and in response to social and cultural trends. Some historic Maori occupation sites were urban in nature, such as Otatara Pa, Hawkes Bay, which was a fortified village for hundreds of inhabitants. Other archaeological sites now exist in an urban context and these sites require protection from continued urban development and expansion.

The arrival of European colonisation and urban environments based on concepts of order and rigidity displaced many places of Maori occupation and usage. The prosperity of the country was deemed to be linked with progress of town planning, survey, property marketing and land clearance.³¹ To hold up this process by protecting Maori sites in the landscape was deemed anti-progress, anti-prosperity.³²

Colonisation, however, did not totally destroy Maori environments. In response to European settlement, new forms of Maori urban settlements developed. At an early stage, the Crown planned new Maori towns based on grid-iron road patterns, survey, and allotments. One of the earliest Maori 'new towns' was planned at Porirua for Ngati Toa Rangatira in 1847. This town, called Takapuawahia, was established to promote humanitarian aims and to concentrate the Maori population of Porirua district in one area.³³

A fundamental and unique response to colonisation in New Zealand was the development of the marae complex which was often accompanied by churches, halls, and schools. The marae remains at the core of Maori society and the physical expression in the built environment of Maori understandings of people and the World.³⁴

In addition to marae, there are many other unique Maori urban places that require special management strategies and assistance. Examples include the settlements of Ratana, Parihaka, Papawai, and Ngaruawahia.

Other aspects of the Maori urban environment include Maori reserve lands, papakainga, memorials, and urupa.

Recognising urban environments of significance to Maori will involve a range of strategies including:

³¹ Felix Wakefield, *Colonial Surveying with a view to the Disposal of Waste Land*, John W. Parker, London, 1849

³² *ibid*, pp 15-16. The Crown however did make provision for the reservation of sacred places for Maori within Crown purchases and Crown grants under the Crown Titles Ordinance 1849

³³ McClean. R, 'Power/Knowledge and Space: The Creation and Alienation of the 'Reserve' at Porirua' Unpublished Thesis, 1996, Massey University

³⁴ Davidson. J, *The Prehistory of New Zealand*, Longman Paul, 1987, p 157

- Giving recognition and prominence to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- The identification, recognition and conservation of archaeological sites and other sites of significance to Maori.
- The identification, recognition and conservation of historic Maori buildings, marae and other early forms of Maori settlements.
- The identification, recognition and conservation of important surroundings associated with marae, including visual corridors from marae to maunga (mountains), awa (rivers), and other taonga.
- The identification, recognition and conservation of Maori memorials, urupa and other features.
- Ensuring proper consultation and collaboration with Maori in the planning and design of urban environments.
- The adoption of Maori values in the planning and design of urban environments.
- The adoption of Maori concepts and designs within contemporary urban designs for buildings and public space in collaboration with tangata whenua.

For further information

- Landcare Research, Low Impact Urban Design and Development (LIUDD) project. In particular, Garth Harmsworth, *The role of Maori values in low-impact urban design and development*, Discussion Paper, Landcare Research.³⁵
- MFE, *Urban Design Case Studies*, March 2005

Recognising Historic Town Plans and Planning Traditions

The vast majority of New Zealand's towns and cities were planned for in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of the main coastal cities were founded by organised settler groups such as the New Zealand Company. These were followed by the development of a network of service towns in the rural hinterland.³⁶

The planning for towns was undertaken in a standardised approach by the Government Survey Department (later Lands and Survey Department). This approach resulted in the planning of towns with a street width of 99 feet and a grid pattern road and allotment layout. The plans featured quarter acre sections, and made deliberate provision for open space for recreational purposes. For example, the Plans of Towns Regulations Act 1875 provided for 1/10th of the land to be set aside as open space, and this encouraged civic squares and

³⁵ See: http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/urban/liudd/maori_urban_sustainability.pdf

³⁶ Hamer, D, *New Towns in the New World*, Columbia University Press, 1990, p 111

botanical gardens.³⁷ These reserves became standardized to not less than a one tenth of the whole area of the town (for municipal reserves: 1 acre to every 10 acres).³⁸

The early towns of New Zealand were designed to concentrate populations together in a settlement without overcrowding or encouraging the spread of disease. The towns also provided for:

- An interconnected street network with often a clear hierarchy.
- Access by walking.
- Open space and reserves.
- Public space for halls, churches, courts, etc
- Provision for diversity of uses.

On the negative side, early town plans often ignored natural hazards (especially flooding) and suffered from poor transport connections to both the hinterland and other towns.

With historical research and investigation of town plans, local authorities can identify and protect significant elements in the urban environment. These elements may include subdivision patterns, roading network, and reserves. In some instances, early elements of town plans were never realised. For example, Feilding's plan in the Manawatu District was based on the plan for Manchester and was designed with two public squares. Only one public square however, was ever built.

Local authorities may provide for the implementation of aspects of early town plans in the contemporary environment or that the principles behind the early town plans can inform modern day structure planning.

Wellington City, Wakefield and the New Zealand Company

The founding of Wellington, Nelson, Wanganui, and New Plymouth was carried out by the New Zealand Company between 1839 and 1850. This company was the 'brainchild' of Edward Gibbon Wakefield who wanted to promote systematic or managed colonization according to a 'concentrated settlement pattern.'

While serving a term in Newgate Prison in the 1820s, Wakefield published his ideas entitled *A Letter from Sydney* in a London weekly. Wakefield was concerned about the effects of transportation (of prisoners) and the 'empty waste' lands. He believed that lands like Australia were indeed being left to waste and this contributed to the undermining of the civilization idea: 'there are millions upon millions of acres as fertile as mine, to be had for nothing and, what is more there are not people to take them.'³⁹ From a strongly environmental determinist belief, Wakefield argued that if settlers live in a land that was deemed to be too large for their needs it will undermine civilization.

³⁷ Memon, P.A. 'Shaking off a colonial legacy? – Town and Country planning in New Zealand, 1870s to 1980s, *Planning Perspectives*, Vol 6, 1991, pp 19-32

³⁸ Public Reserves Act 1854; Public Domains Act 1860; Municipal Reserves Act 1874; Plans of Towns Regulations Act 1875; Survey Regulations under the 'Land Act 1885' NZG, 1886, vol 1, p 636; Public Reserves and Domains Act 1908

³⁹ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, 'A letter from Sydney' [1829] in M.F. Lloyd Prichard, *The Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield*, Collins, London, 1968, p 103

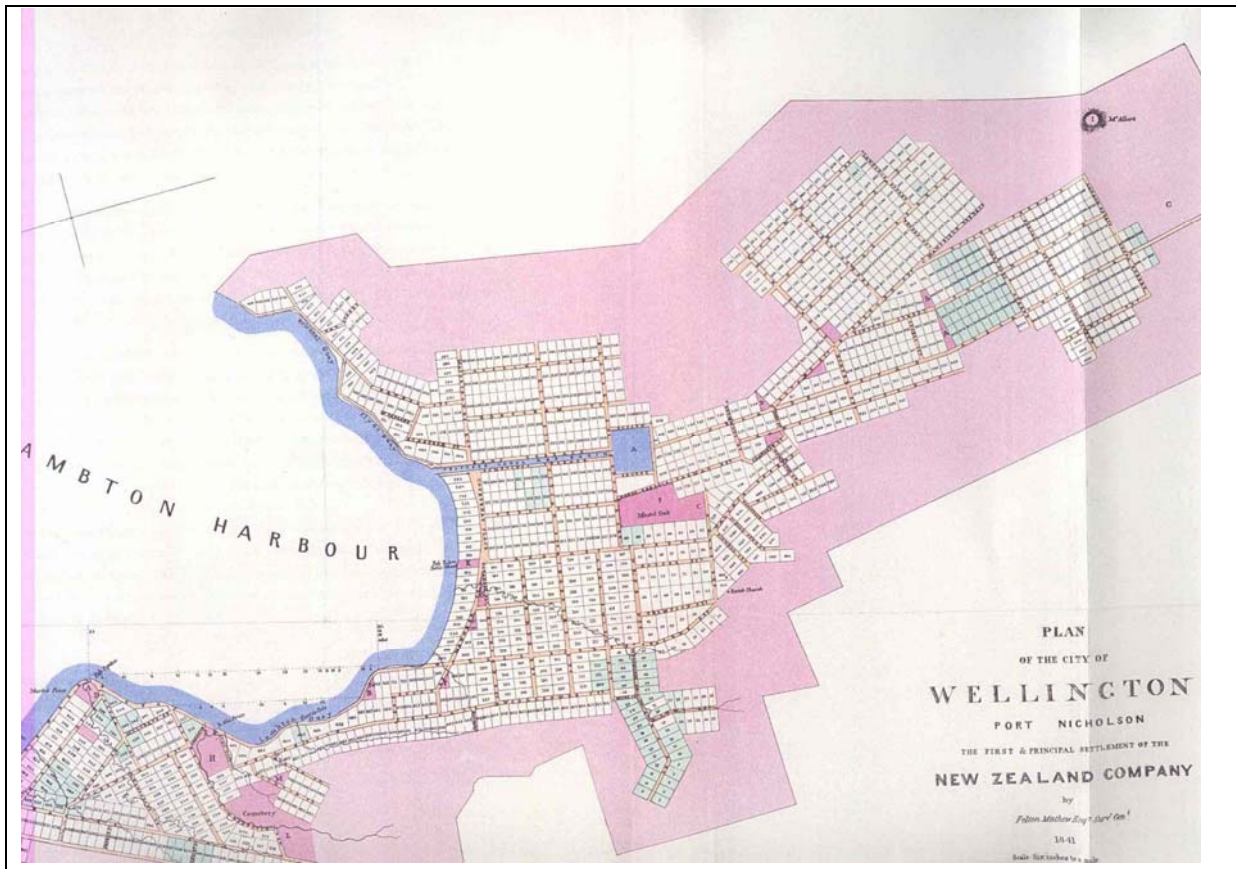
For Wakefield the solution to Australia and the other colonies was to ensure 'CONCENTRATION [which] would produce what never did and never can exist without it – CIVILIZATION'.⁴⁰ To achieve this Wakefield proposed the tools of systematic colonization: a government controlled land title system, controlled sale of waste lands at a sufficient price, controlled and selected emigration that would create a gender and class balance and a concentrated and urban-based settlement.

The core of Wellington's existing CBD (excluding the reclaimed land) is based on the Wellington town plan of 1840 by William Mein Smith (see below) who was the chief surveyor of the New Zealand Company. The plan provided for 1100 town sections surrounded by additional country 100-acre country lots. To achieve the concentration ideals of Wakefield, the town sections and country lots were separated by a green town belt. The street network consisted of a number of quays along the foreshore and arterial roads leading up the main valleys. The zoning provisions were restricted to reserves for Maori (the Wellington tenths), and reserves for public institutions established by Fenton Mathew. The street network, allotment pattern, the green belt and the public reserves remain key features of Wellington CBD today.



Town of Wellington (detail), W. M. Smith, 1840. New Zealand Company

⁴⁰ *ibid*, p 134 emphasis in original.



Fenton Mathew, Plan of Wellington, 1841. Source: Waitangi Tribunal, *Te Wanganui a Tara Me Ona Takiwa*, 2003.

Recognising historic town plans and planning traditions will involve a range of strategies including:

- Historical research and investigation relating to early town planning.
- The identification, recognition and conservation of historic town plans and urban environments, including layouts, road patterns, reserves, and allotments.
- Adapting early historic town plans to provide direction to contemporary urban planning.

Recognising and Conserving Historic Landmarks

Landmarks are prominent buildings, structures or geographical features that identify a location and serve as a locational reference point. Landmarks are often a significant focal point which were often 'vertical symbols of congregation'.⁴¹ The landmark types range from memorials, bridges, steps, fountains, statues, public buildings, churches and marae. For

⁴¹ Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape*, Butterworth Architecture, London, 1971, p 26

many small towns, the prominent landmark is regularly the war memorial or church. In larger towns, landmarks are frequently prominent tall or public buildings.

The conservation of all landmarks within a town, city, district or region should be an important objective of any urban design strategy.

The preservation of landmarks requires ongoing repair and maintenance. This work should be guided by a conservation plan.⁴²

The conservation plan should also examine issues relating to the management of the surroundings associated with the landmark. It is often the case that landmarks can become isolated by poor transport and reserve planning.

In some instances, landmarks can also become divorced from the original relationship of the item to its site and locality. This can happen when landmarks are inappropriately relocated or are surrounded by inappropriate activities, such as reclamation. As illustrated by the Cook Landing Site in Gisborne, a historic reserve and registered Category I historic place, heritage can be decontextualised 'without moving it'.⁴³

Vandalism is an ongoing problem for many landmarks in the public domain. National guidelines for crime prevention through environmental design have been published by the Ministry of Justice.⁴⁴ These guidelines outline seven qualities for well-designed, safer places which include:

- Access: safe movement and connections.
- Surveillance and sightlines: See and be seen.
- Layout: Clear and logical orientation.
- Activity mix: Eyes on the street.
- Sense of ownership: Showing a space is cared for.
- Quality environments: Well-designed, managed and maintained environments.
- Physical protection: Using active security measures.

By adopting this guidance, there are often win-win benefits for both heritage conservation and safe communities. For example, ensuring open sightlines to a historic landmark may improve both public surveillance and retain adequate visual catchments or corridors from a heritage perspective. This was demonstrated in the recent upgrade of the Palmerston North Square which provided for both conservation of historic structures and improving public surveillance.

As outlined in the *National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design*, the planning for improved safer places needs to involve the communities of interest and in the planning for historic landmarks and places, heritage professionals should be involved, including the NZHPT.

Recognising and conserving historic landmarks will involve a range of strategies including:

⁴² See Greg Bowron and Jan Harris, *Preparing Conservation Plans*, NZHPT, 2000

⁴³ Gavin McLean, *100 Historic Places in New Zealand*, Hodder Moa Beckett Ltd, Auckland, 2002, p 38

⁴⁴ Ministry of Justice, *National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in New Zealand, Part 1: Seven Qualities of Safer Places*, November 2005

- Providing for ongoing repair, maintenance and conservation of historic landmarks.
- Ensuring the significance of the original relationship of the historic landmark to its site and locality is preserved.
- Ensuring the surroundings associated with the landmark are managed to retain integrity of heritage value, including the provision of buffer areas.
- Providing adequate visual catchments or corridors to the landmark from major viewing points and from the landmark to outside elements.
- Mitigating vandalism and preventing crime through environmental design.

Recognising and Conserving Small Towns

Many small towns in rural environments have historic streetscapes of significant heritage value. These small towns were often established as service centres for rural industries and contain shopping areas, public buildings, service buildings, parks, schools, libraries, post offices, residential areas, and small industry. In the North Island, examples would include Eltham, Inglewood, Ohura, Raetihi, Wairoa, Mangaweka, Ongaonga, Otane, Ormondville, Murchison, and Marton.

Changes in rural economies and society since the 1970s have meant that many small rural towns are struggling to retain both resident populations and viable economies. As a consequence, many historic buildings are abandoned without the benefit of regular repair and maintenance. Many of these buildings become targets for vandalism.

Unfortunately, many small towns have become sources of historic buildings to be relocated for rural-residential lifestyle blocks or to be shifted into other 'historic' towns. For example, in the Wairarapa, Masterton District Council has introduced stricter district plan rules to protect the historic building stock from relocation to places outside the district. The cumulative effect of relocation will compromise the character of small towns in the long term.

Other small towns can be adversely affected by urban sprawl in periphery areas when original settlements can become dwarfed by large new subdivisions, new retailing complexes or semi-industrial development. Using zoning and structure planning, local authorities can develop buffer areas between small towns and new urban developments.

Small towns are sensitive to transport changes and inappropriate roading developments can divide small town communities or adversely affect the surroundings associated with historic small towns. For many small towns adjoining state highways, safety concerns can lead to pressures to relocate historic buildings away from busy roads.

Recognising and conserving the historic characteristics of small towns will involve a range of strategies including:

- Identifying, recognising and protecting the significant historic characteristics of small urban environments using a heritage landscape approach.

- Providing for ongoing repair, maintenance and conservation of significant historic buildings within small towns.
- Encouraging economic activity to enable the continued adaptive use of historic buildings and infrastructure.
- Regulating new building work, including relocations.
- Ensuring the surroundings associated with the small town are managed to retain integrity of heritage value, including the provision of buffer areas.
- Managing subdivision and advertising.
- Mitigating vandalism and preventing crime through environmental design.
- Providing interpretation and public information.

Recognising and Conserving Historic Buildings.

The conservation of historic buildings requires a strategy for both conservation of building fabric and an urban design approach to ensure the conservation of the urban context – surroundings.

Fundamentally, the loss of historic buildings will undermine both conservation and urban design objectives and lead to a lower quality urban environment.

Within the larger cities, there is intense development pressure in relation to commercial historic buildings. This pressure can involve proposals for demolition and removal, additions, including roof-top additions, and interior fitouts.

Roof-top additions for new apartments has been particularly popular activity in Wellington. The results of a survey by Gordon Holden and VUW architecture students during 2003-2004 estimated that ‘approximately 8000 apartment-living residents are accommodated in converted or expanded offices.’⁴⁵ Many of the roof-top additions were considered to have negative effects on the heritage values of the host building and on the streetscape:

About half of the apartments that are designed to reflect or be sympathetic with their host buildings, whether or not the buildings are heritage-listed, are aesthetically tolerable. However, with few exceptions these ‘adaptations’ generally tend to lack a conviction of intent which diminishes their architectural integrity...Disappointingly, far too many examples of ‘adaptations; are, to put it bluntly, architectural failures aesthetically, functionally and environmentally. They are embarrassments to the city and the architectural profession – that is, if they are indeed designed by architects.⁴⁶

As indicated in the Auckland *St James Theatre* case, aesthetics is an important value and consideration under the RMA and this will require evaluating the aesthetic effects of

⁴⁵ Gordon Holden, ‘Superiority Complex’ *Architecture New Zealand*, March-April 2004, p 54

⁴⁶ *ibid*, p 57

development on both existing heritage buildings and the wider streetscape.⁴⁷ In other words, even if a proposed development ensures the conservation of building fabric of heritage value, it may not meet the sustainable management purpose of the RMA if it fails to achieve a quality aesthetic design with regard to the streetscape or public open space. In addition, as illustrated by the *Canterbury Museum* case, a design of an addition which achieves quality aesthetic design may not meet the purpose of the RMA if it fails to conserve the historic heritage values of the building.⁴⁸

Some cities have introduced design review panel processes. By ensuring development proposals are reviewed by professional architects, landscape architects, urban designers and conservation architects, quality heritage and urban design objectives should be realised.

The quality of resource consent decision making is grounded by the quality of district plan rules. Guide No.3 (district plans) of this guidance series outlines a range of best practice plan rules relating to historic buildings, areas, sites of significance to Maori, and archaeological sites.

Recognising and conserving historic buildings will involve a range of strategies including:

- Identifying, recognising and protecting historic buildings.
- Providing support for ongoing repair, maintenance and conservation of historic buildings.
- Protecting historic buildings from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, including alterations, additions, relocation, and demolition.
- Ensuring the protection of the surroundings associated with historic buildings.
- Managing subdivision and advertising.
- Mitigating vandalism and preventing crime through environmental design.
- Providing interpretation and public information.

Recognising and Conserving Historic Townscapes.

New Zealand has a wide range of historic townscapes. They include:

- Town centres
- Commercial streets
- Central business districts
- Historic parks and gardens
- Inner-City and periphery suburbs
- Industrial and warehousing areas
- Transportation centres
- Historic towns

⁴⁷ *Urban Auckland v Auckland City Council*, Judgement of Keane J, CIV 407/04, High Court

⁴⁸ *Canterbury Museum Trust Board v Christchurch City Council*, C59/2006, EC.

There is no definitive list of historic townscapes and the identification, assessment and research processes for townscapes are evolving in the context of heritage landscapes (see Discussion Paper No. 3 of this guidance series).

There are a growing number of towns that do have high collective heritage integrity and have some recognition in LTCCPs, structure plans, regional policy statements and district plans. Examples include Thames, Opotiki, Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, Feilding, Marton, Wanganui, Eltham, Greytown, Martinborough, Foxton, Petone, Collingwood, Greymouth, Westport, Hokitika, Timaru, Oamaru, Arrowtown, Ranfurly, Lawrence and Invercargill. There could be many others that could be added to this list.

These historic town centres have high landmark qualities and legibility as distinctive places and heritage is a key tourism attraction.

Historic archaeological research and investigation is an important aspect in relation to many historic areas and townscapes. Archaeological research has the potential to contribute towards the understanding of the city and a way of life. Development should take into account potential archaeological issues, the need for recording and possibilities for retaining and interpreting material *in situ* depending on its significance and accessibility.

Mainstreets

The typical 'main street' is perhaps the most common form of historic townscape in New Zealand. These streets are normally the main commercial area and contain commercial shopping activities, public buildings, churches, parks, with increasing apartment residential living. Many main streets have been actively managed by communities and local authorities to promote both the economic and cultural values of the street. In many cases, main streets and town centers have been actively managed by organisations such as members of the Town Centres Association of New Zealand. This association provides a network of information, services and contacts for members. The Town Centres Association of New Zealand advocates for a 'four-point approach' for managing town centres:

- ***Organisation & Management*** - Building consensus and co-operation among the many groups and stakeholders that play a role within the town centre revitalisation process.
- ***Physical Enhancement*** - Enhancing the appearance of the town centre by improving the layout and design of the centre, rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, and long-term planning.
- ***Economic Development*** - Strengthening the town's commercial business district, improving retail / business mix, meeting new opportunities and challenges.
- ***Marketing & Promotion*** - Marketing the town centre's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors.

The Association also promotes three key programmes: MAINstreet New Zealand, Town Center Assessments, and OurTown New Zealand.⁴⁹

Historic residential areas are another common townscape. Parnell in Auckland and Thorndon in Wellington were some of the first residential areas in New Zealand to be recognised by their respective local authorities. In Wellington, Thorndon has been joined by Mt Victoria, Mt Cook, and Newtown to be listed in the district plan as character areas.

Replication and relocation

Demolition, relocation, and the construction of new buildings as well as inappropriate additions and alterations within these historic areas can undermine the collective integrity. Some towns have actively encouraged the inwards relocation of historic buildings to enhance the heritage ‘feel’ of the town or require new buildings to conform to design codes that aim to replicate historic building styles.

The NZHPT actively discourages inwards relocation of historic buildings into historic areas. New buildings should be compatible in design and proportions with the historic character of the area. Any replication work requires careful management so not to undermine the original integrity of the townscape. For example, new buildings should be clearly marked by a date stamp.

Tall buildings

The height of new buildings is an important consideration and local authorities can develop height restrictions within district plans to retain the integrity of historic townscapes. Generally, the height of new buildings should be aligned to the heights of the existing historic building stock. This requires the appropriate heights for new buildings to be designed in the context of each individual historic townscape. The Environment Court has recently upheld a plan change proposal by Wellington City to regulate the heights of new buildings on Oriental Parade to protect the surroundings of St Gerard’s Monastery.⁵⁰

The development of tall new buildings adjoining historic townscapes can also be a significant issue and the guidance developed by English Heritage and CABA is relevant for the New Zealand situation.⁵¹

New ‘Iconoclastic’ buildings

Many large architectural buildings projects within cities attempt to ‘make a statement’ or be ‘iconoclastic’ by the adoption of extreme designs. The architectural trend, known as deconstructivism, is characterised by lack of conventional rectangularity and symmetry or adherence to any traditional building codes.⁵² Since the high-profile Deconstructivist Architecture exhibition held in 1988 at the New York Museum of Modern Art, this trend has gone global and now nearly every large urban centre has examples of deconstructivist

⁴⁹ Contact the Town Centres Association of New Zealand for further information:
<http://www.towncentre.org.nz/index.htm>

⁵⁰ *Oriental Parade (Clyde Quay) Planning Society v Wellington City Council*, W 63/2005

⁵¹ English Heritage and CABA, *Guidance on Tall Buildings*, March 2003

⁵² Wigley, M, *The Architecture of Deconstruction, Derrida’s Haunt*, MIT Press, 1993

architecture. By nature, these buildings attempt to achieve landmark status and generally to attract public attention and an emotional response.

The character of many historic townscapes lies in the collective whole rather than the architectural quality of an individual building. The building of 'iconic' new buildings can undermine this collective quality in a design sense. For this reason, many design codes in both New Zealand and overseas guard against larger, iconoclastic or deconstructivist forms of architecture within historic areas and townscapes.

Urban Sprawl and Large Format Retailing

Perhaps the most significant challenge to the historic townscapes is urban sprawl or the unplanned expansion of suburbs into the rural environment. Urban sprawl is often accompanied by new forms of retailing, especially large malls or 'big box' stores generally known as large format retail or LFR. These developments have the potential to undermine the economic viability of existing historic town centres.

While the effects of LFR varies according to a range of economic, social, and geographical factors, research in both Europe and North America has found that unregulated 'superstore sprawl' is harmful to historic retailing environments.⁵³

In the United Kingdom, the issue of new format retailing was the subject of a House of Commons Committee investigation and a Committee report *Shopping Centres and Their Future*.⁵⁴ As a result of this investigation, the UK Department of the Environment issued a revised Planning Policy Guidance (PPG6, June 1996) regarding 'Town Centres and Retail Development'.⁵⁵ This guidance document required local authorities in Britain to actively plan for the development of town centres by identifying additional sites for retail developments. With regard to Superstores, the document states that:

In the case of many smaller centres, particularly historic towns, the best solution may be an edge of centre food store with parking facilities, which enables car-borne shoppers to walk into the centre from their other business in town, and shoppers who arrive in the centre by other means of transport to walk to the store.⁵⁶

The American experience also promotes 'edge of centre' locations for LFR. Extensive studies carried out by the National Trust for Historic Preservation over a number of years have confirmed that unregulated LFR can have high adverse effects on historic centres.⁵⁷ The following best practice principles are based on the National Trust research:

⁵³ English Heritage, *Retail Development in Historic Areas*, 2005, www.helm.org.uk

Constance E. Beaumont, *How Superstore Sprawl can harm communities*, National Trust for Historic Preservation, USA, 1994. See also: UK, DETR, *Impact of Large Foodstores on Market towns and District Centers*, September 1998 <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144757>

⁵⁴ House of Commons, Environment Committee, *Shopping Centres and their Future: Fourth Report from the Environment Committee together with the proceedings of the Committee...*HMSO, 1994;

⁵⁵ Department of the Environment, 'Town Centres and Retail Developments' PPG6, June 1996. This guidance is currently under review.

⁵⁶ *ibid*, p 20

⁵⁷ Constance E. Beaumont, *How Superstore Sprawl can harm communities*, National Trust for Historic Preservation, USA, 1994

New retailing development should avoid the demolition or removal of historic buildings and structures.

New retailing development should respect and adhere to the historic layout of the town with regard to street network, street frontages, and parking.

New retailing development should be at an appropriate scale. A store's size should be appropriate for the community in which the store locates and new retailing developments should not overwhelm the local economy.

New retailing development should encourage the re-use of existing buildings. Adapted reuse of existing buildings should be encouraged. The reuse of historic buildings must be compatible with the heritage values of the existing building.

New retailing developments should be located within the CBD or in proximity with existing commercial centres. New retailing developments should not undermine the economic viability of existing historic retailing centres and associated infrastructure by the creation of entirely new commercial centres.

New retailing development should be promote pedestrian access and enhance public transport links. The store's location and design should encourage, or at least enable, people to arrive by foot or public transport.

New retailing development should be of good overall design and should relate harmoniously to its surroundings in terms of scale, character, and appearance. New retailing development should provide for landscaping, preservation of significant trees, and green buffers as appropriate.

New retailing development should adopt high quality signage and advertising displays that are compatible with the existing townscape.

Recognising and conserving the historic townscapes will involve a range of strategies including:

- Identifying, recognising and protecting historic townscapes.
- Providing for ongoing repair, maintenance and conservation of historic places, sites within historic townscapes.
- Protecting historic townscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, including alterations, additions, relocation, and demolition.
- Ensuring the protection of the surroundings associated with historic townscapes.
- Discouraging inwards relocation of historic buildings and carefully managing new buildings that aim to replicate historic building styles.
- Ensuring new buildings are compatible with the heritage values of the townscape in terms of size, proportion, scale, and design.
- Managing new retailing developments, especially large format retail.

- **Managing subdivision and advertising.**
- **Mitigating vandalism and preventing crime through environmental design.**
- **Providing interpretation and public information.**