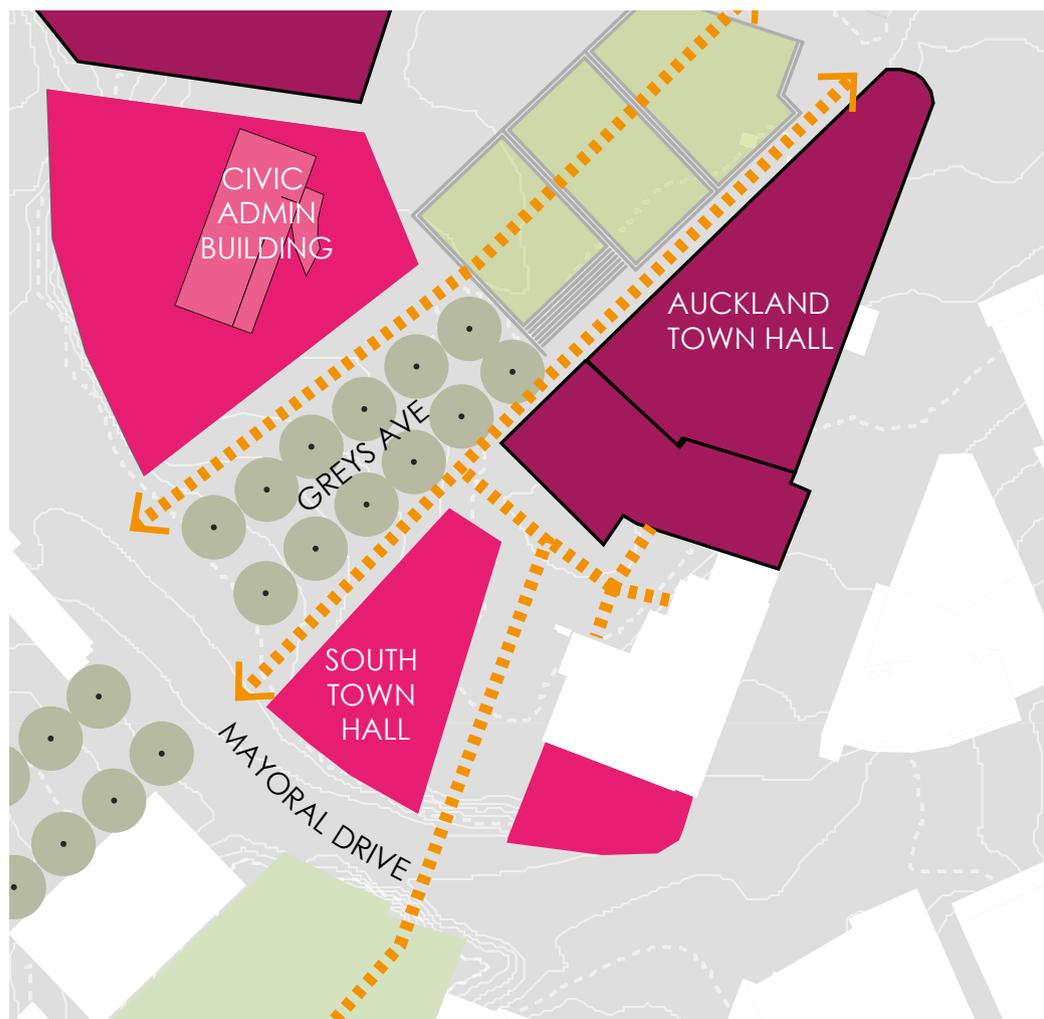


## SITE D: SOUTH TOWN HALL

The area, a temporary surface car park, provides pedestrian and servicing access behind the Town Hall, Q Theatre and Tanuki's Cave restaurant, as well as frontage to The Basement, the Huffer clothing store and the artists' studios above in the Sunday School Union building, which faces onto Queen Street. The Mayoral Drive underpass links the car park to Myers Park.

Before the construction of Mayoral Drive in the late 1970s, this site formed part of a wedge-shaped perimeter block between Queen Street and Greys Avenue, which tapered off where they met at the northern point of the Town Hall. Until 1989 much



Key design principles

of the site was occupied by the Salvation Army Congress Hall, which fronted Greys Avenue. The Public Works Act approval to demolish the Salvation Army Congress Hall required that the site only be used for surface car parking until a “higher and greater” use could strengthen the role of the quarter. This expectation was reaffirmed in the Aotea Quarter Plan 2007 and Action Plan 2010-2015.

In contrast to the ‘landscape’ condition of the space west of Greys Avenue, buildings and spaces east of Greys Avenue can be considered as ‘architecture’ – the traditional cityscape where buildings strongly define a fine-grain pattern of perimeter blocks. The opportunity exists to recreate something of the old perimeter block with new development on the corner of Mayoral Drive and Greys Avenue. This space, and the development itself, would lend itself to use by creative industries and performance arts agencies, supporting the existing enclave of uses and the advice from JLL.

Although the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan permits development up to 50m on the site, any proposed building should relate well to the existing historic buildings, minimise shading of the proposed courtyard and form an active, relatively strong edge to the Mayoral Drive/Grey's Avenue corner. Development between four and seven storeys is considered appropriate.

The following design requirements apply:

- Built form completes the street edges with active (retail and/or food and beverage) ground-floor frontage on Greys Avenue and the internal courtyard, and occupied frontage on Mayoral Drive.

- Building scale to complement the heritage buildings in the block bound by Queen Street/ Mayoral Drive and Greys Avenue.
- Reveal the Waihorotiu Stream – if not literally possible, then introduce a narrative in remembrance.
- Uses and spaces that support creative industries/ the arts and complement independent performance venues.
- Create an open courtyard or covered atrium space between new and existing buildings, to maintain required access and provide a safe, intuitive and attractive walkway between Myers Park and Aotea Square.
- Single consolidated car access off Greys Avenue.
- Use high quality building materials and techniques that are durable, sustainable and meet the highest standards for noise reduction.

The redevelopment of 329 Queen Street (on the north-west corner of Mayoral Drive and Queen Street) could be part of a bigger scheme, with a new corner building at this significant intersection, or new access (e.g. Spanish-style steps) up from the proposed courtyard to Queen Street.

South Town Hall site





Illustration of view south through possible future courtyard development towards Mayoral Drive underpass & Myers Park

## PUBLIC FEEDBACK

There was a widespread view that surface area car parks were a waste of space. There was interest in a range of uses and facilities that could be developed on council owned land adjacent to the Civic Administration Building and the back of the Town Hall (adjacent to the Q and Basement theatres).

*“A liveable city isn’t measured by its car parks; it’s measured by how well people love living in it.”* - Written submission.

Suggestions for better use of council owned land particularly adjacent to the Civic Administration Building and the car park behind Q Theatre included bike parks, green spaces, developing subsidized studio and rehearsal spaces for local artists, food stalls, local businesses, accessible public spaces, apartments, hotels, water features, fountains, play equipment, pathways, places for meditation, child care, cafes, a show ticket booth, low cost housing. People were also keen to see a lot more cafes, restaurants and bars in the area. It was felt people currently go elsewhere in the City Centre to eat.

The Urban Design Forum expressed support for the preservation of the old CAB building and particularly views of the east and northern faces forming a strong vertical element on the side of Aotea Square, which was seen as very important. The preservation of the external form of the Aotea Centre was seen as less important. Some participants wished to see a ‘building as landscape’ approach taken to any redevelopment of the Aotea Centre and adjoining sites on the western side of Aotea Square, which would see human occupation and activation via terraced levels above the main square.

There was interest in making areas more accessible for use for people and events other than the large programmed events in venues and Aotea Square.

There was a view there should be a balance between programmed and ‘pop up’ type use of spaces. There should also be sufficient unprogrammed time where people are free to use public spaces however they wish. Providing infrastructure and equipment for the community and creative arts sector to use public spaces was viewed as a good idea.

## FRAMEWORK RESPONSE

The Implementation Plan chapter contains a number of projects and initiatives that deliver on this outcome. Three key moves identified through the Framework that build on the previous Aotea Quarter Action Plan and support current investments plans are:

1. Realisation of the development opportunity on four council owned sites – West Bledisloe, Aotea Centre (including adjoining land), Civic Administration Building and South Town Hall – to bolster the quarter’s vibrance and destinational qualities and support the CRL Aotea Station.
2. Delivery of a range of cycle improvement initiatives aimed at leveraging on the recent surrounding cycleway investment and ‘filling the gaps’, including additional bike storage, new routes into and through the Quarter, specifically, an east-west cycle link connecting Nelson Street with Queen Street and over to Grafton Gully;
3. Multiple pedestrian improvements to Mayoral Drive (e.g. free left turn removal at Vincent Street, introduction of mid-block crossings, intersection upgrades, and active frontage promotion) so that it can positively contribute to the public life of the Quarter and better connect the core to the surrounding neighbourhoods.



