

Unitary Plan - Managing Frontages and Pedestrian Amenity in the City Centre

1. Executive summary

This report considers options for Unitary Plan management of City Centre ground and lower floor frontages of buildings. Regulatory management of these frontages contributes to achieving Auckland Plan and Draft City Centre Masterplan aspirations for high quality pedestrian amenity in the City Centre.

Three options are canvassed. The preferred option is retaining existing Central Area District Plan provisions with some modifications. The two alternative options are introducing a 'street typologies' approach or retaining the status quo.

Preferred option: This option retains existing provisions tailored to the quarters and precincts, adds some city-wide development controls and assessment criteria, and makes modifications to other provisions.

Advantages of this option include retaining the place-based approach of the Central Area District Plan, while introducing some 'bottom line' controls across the whole City Centre. Disadvantages include it retains existing differing standards across the City Centre's precincts and quarters that create difficulties in articulating what the desired urban design outcome is on given streets

Alternative option 1 – 'street typologies': This option is based on Waitakere City Council's Plan Change 18 (PC18). It applies a classification to streets under which sit a number of provisions, such as controls on glazing and continuity of street frontage and assessment criteria. The advantages of this approach include potential enhanced communication to developers and the community as to how building frontages can contribute to the desired urban design outcome on any given street. The disadvantages of this approach include applying it to the City Centre would necessitate some loss of place-specific provisions within precincts and quarters.

Alternative option 2 – status quo: Existing provisions in the Central Area District Plan manage the ground and lower floor frontages of buildings via the Plan's precincts and quarters. Development controls and assessment criteria are tailored to the particular precinct or quarter. There are no relevant development controls which apply over the whole City Centre. Part 5 of the District Plan contains some City Centre-wide assessment criteria that apply outside the precincts and quarters.

The advantage of this option is that the existing system is very 'place-based', with provisions specific to the location. The disadvantage is the number of similar but different provisions across the quarters and precincts may create difficulties in articulating what the desired urban design outcome is on given streets.

2. Introduction

An urban design principle set out in the Auckland Plan, and reinforced through the vision of the Draft Central City Masterplan, is for a city with 'A quality public realm, including a focus on quality landscaping, place-making and quality streetscape.'

In the City Centre, the outcome to achieve this principle is, in part, streets with high pedestrian amenity.

Streets should be thought of in two perspectives: (1) the horizontal plane of the footpath and road carriageway; and (2) the vertical plane provided by buildings which edge this space. Achieving streets with high pedestrian amenity entails ensuring quality across both these perspectives: a quality footpath and road environment, and a quality built edge.

Council has direct control over the quality of the road reserve as, in most cases, through Auckland Transport, it is the owner of the reserve. Its means to manage the quality of the built edge is through the District Plan.

This report considers the appropriate means to manage the ground and lower floor frontages of buildings in order to contribute to a high quality pedestrian realm.

It reviews current provisions within the Operative Central Area District Plan that pertain to the ground and lower floor frontages of buildings and considers options for management within the Unitary Plan.

3. Desired urban design outcomes

What the desired urban design outcomes should be for the ground and lower level frontages of buildings in the City Centre has been distilled from:

- A review of urban design related plan changes to the Central Area District Plan and to Auckland region legacy council district plans
- Urban design best practice
- The existing physical environment of the City Centre public realm and its desired future state, as reflected in draft or approved strategic documents (such as the Auckland Plan and Draft City Centre Masterplan).

From a review of the above, it is recommended that the ground and lower level frontages of buildings in the City Centre display the following attributes:

1. *An active edge:* In order to support pedestrian activity, buildings adjoining the public realm should contain 'active' uses, such as retail, food and services, and allow views into the building.
2. *A contained edge:* Supporting pedestrian activity requires the interface between building and public realm to be clearly defined by a generally continuous built edge that has no or limited setback from the boundary and the space to be framed by building frontages of a height sufficient to provide a sense of enclosure. 'Public realm' should be considered in the wider sense of spaces between buildings that are accessible to the public, whether privately or publicly owned. This includes streets, open spaces and through-site links.

3. *A high quality edge:* Building frontages should contribute to visual interest at ground and lower levels through design that displays an adept use of modulation, articulation and considered use of materials.
4. *Ground floor adaptability:* The ground floor of the building should be of sufficient stud height to allow a change of use.
5. *Offer pedestrian amenity (weather protection):* Auckland has a temperate and changeable climate with a high rainfall. There should be a presumption towards the provision of street verandahs to provide weather protection, including protection from wind and summer sun for pedestrians.
6. *Context responsive:* With the exception of providing a high quality edge, the degree to which all the above are appropriate on any given street, open space or through-site link is all dependent on context. To offer an example, the existing and desired characteristics for a building frontage within the Queen Street Valley are such that the frontage should generally display all the above outcomes. In contrast, the general characteristics of the Learning Quarter (landscaped, 'open' streets and grounds) are such that fewer of the outcomes are applicable.

Note that providing a high quality edge entails, in the main, responding to context. For example, responding to character, heritage, landscape, building setback and grain.

4. Operative District Plan

4.1 Overview

The Operative Central Area District Plan primarily manages the ground and lower floor frontages of buildings through its precincts and quarters, with development controls and assessment criteria that apply to that area.

Some controls, such as the street verandah control, use more of a City Centre wide approach through mapping where the control applies on an 'overlay' for the whole City Centre (Figure 6.13).

In 2005, recognising that the District Plan had little design control on development outside its precincts and quarters, Plan Change 2 was notified. This Plan Change introduced Restricted Discretionary activity status for new building construction for development outside the precincts and quarters (with the exception of the Residential Precincts), with assessment on a number of urban design based criteria.

Criteria of relevance, introduced by Plan Change 2, to managing the form of building frontages in these areas include maximising glazing and having buildings address and align to the street boundary.

Refer appendices for a tabulation of development controls and assessment criteria relating to the ground and lower floor frontages of buildings according to precinct, quarter, and 'Part 5' area.¹

¹ The term 'Part 5 areas' is used to describe those areas of the City Centre that are subject to the urban design assessment criteria in Part 5 of the Central Area District Plan, brought into the Plan by Plan

4.1 Comment

The following is a review of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in regard to the Operative District Plan's management of building frontages.

Strengths

- Many provisions are tailored to the characteristics of the particular quarter or precinct. Examples include some of the detailed provisions within the Britomart and Wynyard Quarters, often pertinent to specific sites, and the overall approach in the Learning Quarter, which recognises the area's unique qualities.
- The retail and pedestrian 'core' of the City Centre (eg: Queen Street Valley and Karangahape Road) is supported by rules prescribing active uses – in the main: food and beverage, retail and services.
- Most areas have a development control and related assessment criterion requiring a continuous frontage on all or specified streets, contributing to achieving a contained edge.
- A review of the frontages subject to the street verandah control shows good coverage. There is some limited opportunity to extend the verandah control to additional frontages.

Weaknesses

- Precincts and quarters that have been the subject of more recent plan changes have a greater number of urban design related provisions. This has resulted in an inconsistent approach to how building frontages are managed across the City Centre. For example, the Victoria and Wynyard Quarters have urban design provisions on matters such as glazing and minimum ground floor height, while these are absent from 'older' quarters such as the Viaduct Harbour or Part 5 areas.
- Provisions are generally targeted to street frontages, with more limited instances of application to open space and through-site link frontages. This limits the ability to achieve high quality building frontages to these equally important components of the public realm.
- Most areas do not have a minimum required ground floor height. There is therefore limited means to manage ground floor adaptability. The exceptions are the Victoria, Wynyard and Britomart Quarters, which require a minimum 4m ground floor height.
- There is no control on the length of blank walls in the District Plan and most areas do not have a minimum glazing development control, contributing to inactive edges. While several precincts and quarters have glazing related assessment criteria, the wording of the criteria is generally vague, eg: *'frontages must contribute to pedestrian vitality.'*
- There is no control on the location or design of ground floor apartments in the District Plan, leading to design responses that are not appropriate to the location and produce a poor quality edge.

Change 2. These are areas outside the precincts and quarters, with the exception of the Residential Precincts, which are covered by Part 5.

- Many parts of the City Centre have no requirement for a minimum frontage height, with a consequential lack of control to achieve a contained edge.
- The number of development controls and assessment criteria (and, in some instances, minor differences between them) across the different quarters and precincts of the City Centre contributes to a lack of clarity what the desired urban design outcomes are.

Opportunities

To review existing provisions relating to the management of City Centre building facades to:

- ensure that there is an appropriate level and extent of control in order to achieve the urban design outcomes listed at section 3 of this report
- remove areas of repetition and introduce, where possible, City Centre wide provisions, in order to more clearly communicate desired urban design outcomes.

5. Options for the Unitary Plan

Options for Unitary Plan management of City Centre buildings at ground and lower levels to the public realm are:

Preferred option: Retain existing Central Area District Plan provisions tailored to the quarters and precincts, add some City Centre wide development controls and assessment criteria, and make modifications to other provisions.

Alternative option 1: 'Street typologies' - Introduce a street typologies categorisation system, similar to Waitakere City's PC18.

Alternative option 2: Status quo - Retain existing quarter and precinct urban design rules and assessment criteria and City Centre wide urban design rules and assessment criteria.

5.1 Discussion

Preferred option: Retain existing Central Area District Plan provisions tailored to the quarters and precincts, add some City Centre wide development controls and assessment criteria, and make modifications to other provisions.

Overview

This option entails introducing the following provisions into the District Plan (with necessary consequential amendments):

Minimum ground floor height

- Apply the following development control across the whole City Centre:
Ground floor space in all new buildings fronting a street through-site link or public open space shall have a minimum floor to floor height of 4.5m for a minimum depth of 10m.

Minimum ground floor glazing

- Apply a development control to frontages to identified streets, public open space and through-site links requiring either a minimum of 75% or 50% ground floor glazing.

Refer to map in appendices: City Centre proposed glazing control

- Introduce a standardised glazing assessment criterion throughout the City Centre. Recommended content for criterion as follows:

Building frontages to a ground level street, open space or through-site link must contribute to pedestrian vitality, interest and public safety. This includes a variety of architectural detail and maximising doors, window openings and balconies fronting streets and other public open space.

Frontages entirely of glass (curtain walling or continuous shop front glazing) are not encouraged at ground level adjacent heritage buildings as they can detract from the qualities of the heritage building.

Where feasible, restoration of original ground level detail should be included in plans for buildings adjoining heritage buildings or for alterations to heritage buildings.

Ground floor glazing that relates to the modulation and articulation of the upper storeys of the building, in terms of the arrangement of solid and void (ie: glazing) is encouraged.

Blank walls

- Introduce an assessment criterion on blank walls across the City Centre. Suggested content as follows:

The extent to which blank walls are minimised to street, open space or through-site link frontages. Where a blank wall is necessary, it should make use of modulation, relief or surface detail.

Street verandahs

- Amend Figure 6.13 within the Central Area District Plan to add a requirement for a street verandah as shown on the following map: City Centre proposed frontages subject to verandah control.

Refer to map in appendices.

- Introduce a rule requiring glass verandahs to be patterned in a durable finish (such as fritted, or seraphic glass finish) in order to mask dirt, dust and windblown debris.

Minimum frontage height

- Introduce a development control requiring the frontages of new buildings to be constructed to a minimum height of 19m on wide 'boulevard' streets and 13m on narrower streets.

Refer to map in appendices: City Centre proposed minimum frontage heights

Ground floor level deviation from street / through-site link / public open space

- Apply the following development control across the whole City Centre:

The ground floor within all buildings is to be flush with the adjacent street, through-site link or public open space for a minimum 10m depth from the frontage. On areas of slope, no point of the ground floor to the first 10m of its depth shall be higher or lower than 1.2m above or below the adjacent boundary with the street, through-site link or public open space.

Regardless of the slope of the site the main entry to the ground floor of a building shall be completely flush with the street footpath.

Ground floor residential units

- Introduce criteria for assessment of residential units at ground level street, open space or through-site link frontages throughout the City Centre as part of the general Restricted Discretionary activity assessment required for all new buildings. Recommended content for assessment criteria as follows:

Assessment of a proposal for ground floor residential to a street, open space or through-site link should consider the extent to which the design positively contributes to the public realm and achieves privacy and amenity for the residential occupier by:

- (1) provision of a balcony in front of the glazed façade of the unit*
- (2) a setback from the street / open space / through-site link boundary to the edge of the balcony*
- (3) the setback from boundary to balcony is planted and a fence or wall on the boundary is provided that is low enough to allow direct sightlines from a pedestrian in the public realm to the front of the balcony*
- (4) raising the balcony and floor plate of the ground floor unit above the level of the adjacent street / open space and through-site link to a height sufficient to provide privacy for unit occupiers while retaining the ability to overlook the public realm.*

The ground floor interface of the unit to the street, open space or through-site link should satisfy (1), (2), (3) and (4). A proposal that does not satisfy all 4 components may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that this is appropriate to the context and that the proposal will still achieve a high level of both pedestrian amenity and internal amenity for unit occupiers.

Guidance notes

Public realm aspects: Residential units are considered inappropriate to ground floor street frontages where there is a development control specifying a minimum percentage of ground floor glazing. This is consistent with the rationale behind the glazing control that street frontages to which the control is applied are those which have, or are anticipated to have, higher levels of pedestrian activity.

The degree to which the design of the frontage of the ground floor residential unit positively contributes to the public realm and achieves privacy and amenity for the residential occupier requires a case by case assessment of the interplay of the factors outlined at (1) - (4) of the assessment criterion vis-à-vis the characteristics of the street, open space or through-site link.

As broad guidance, however, a setback of 0.3 – 1.5m to the edge of the balcony is appropriate. This allows sufficient room for a landscaped area. A ground floor balcony and floor plate raised 0.5 -1m above the level of the adjacent street, open space or through-site link is appropriate.

Active uses

No changes are proposed to existing controls within the District Plan that require specified 'active uses' to certain street frontages.

For detailed analysis of the above refer to the appendices attached to this report.

Strengths

- Retains provisions within the District Plan's precincts and quarters that are tailored to the characteristics of that location.
- Introduces two development controls that are appropriate across the City Centre and help achieve adaptable buildings and active edges: minimum ground floor height and ground floor at mean street level.
- Targets a requirement for ground floor glazing to the existing and desired pedestrian amenity level of the street, open space, through-site link.
- Acknowledges that, while street verandahs are generally desirable in the City Centre, they are not appropriate in all locations. For example, in the Learning Quarter and Symonds Street.
- Introduces guidance on how to assess ground floor residential use, currently absent from the District Plan.
- Addresses the difficulty of defining what constitutes a 'blank wall' through an assessment criterion rather than development control approach.
- Introduces a standard City Centre wide criterion to assessing glazing, in place of the current precinct and quarter specific criteria.

Weaknesses

- The corollary of retaining a number of the place specific District Plan provisions on building frontages is the number of provisions that might apply to a given location. However, this is regarded as appropriate due to the rigorous analysis and process many of these provisions have been through (eg: Wynyard, Learning and Britomart Quarters).

Alternative option 1: 'Street typologies' - Introduce a street typologies categorisation system, similar to Waitakere City's PC18

Overview

This option involves applying a suite of 'street typologies' to City Centre streets. Typologies would be determined according to the differing levels of actual and / or desired pedestrian activity and amenity on a street. To achieve the required level of pedestrian amenity the typology has a distinct set of development controls tied to it. For example, streets with a typology requiring higher pedestrian amenity would have development controls requiring higher levels of glazing and building continuity than typologies with a lesser requirement for pedestrian amenity.

Strengths

- Clearly categorising streets as a particular 'type' potentially enables greater clarity on desired urban design outcomes.

Weaknesses

- The City Centre has a number of provisions which relate to managing the ground floor and lower storey facades of buildings particular to specific precincts and quarters. Some of these provisions are the same, however, some differ to lesser or greater degrees. Applying a street typologies approach would require a degree of harmonisation of these provisions to fit into a limited number of City Centre-wide typologies. This would be at the expense of a context-specific response.
- Harmonising provisions would run counter to the extensive submission process on recent plan changes (such as those for the Wynyard and Learning Quarters) that have resulted in provisions tailored to those areas.
- The Learning Quarter is a specific (and sizeable) part of the City Centre with a distinct built and landscape form and distinct operating needs. There is no benefit in applying a generic street typology to this quarter.
- Appendix 1 shows no clear grouping of similar provisions which could be pulled together under a discrete set of typologies.
- The PC18 approach of linking street typologies to a verandah control cannot practically be applied to the City Centre. There is not a natural nexus or delineation between City Centre streets which require verandahs and those that don't and any particular hierarchy of street typologies.

Detail

Waitakere City Council's PC18 introduced a new approach into the city's District Plan to manage street frontages within its town centres. This was attributing streets within Waitakere City's centres to one of the following 'typologies': *Town Centre, Mainstreet, Commercial, Transitional Commercial, Periphery, Mixed Use and Residential*.

This is not a place-based system, in contrast to the Central Area District Plan method of largely tailoring rules to each precinct and quarter. Rather, it uses a grouping of provisions which can apply across commercial centres.

Each typology is linked to a combination of development controls and assessment criteria, with an overall Limited Discretionary activity status for development on sites that front to a street subject to a typology.

My review of PC18 finds that most of its street typologies (eg: *Transitional Commercial* and *Periphery*) are not directly relevant to the City Centre environment. This is due both to the fact that the City Centre has the strongest street-based pedestrian environment in the region, and Auckland Plan and Draft Central City Masterplan aspirations to further improve and widen the physical extent of the city's pedestrian environment.

The two PC18 typologies of possible relevance to the City Centre are *Mainstreet typologies 1 and 2*. The development controls for these typologies require buildings:

- of a minimum 2 storeys of useable floor space above the finished level of the street
- built up to and continuous for the full width of the site's street frontage
- articulated for the full length of the site's street frontage
- with a minimum of 60% active edge for the length of the site's street frontage
- with a canopy across the full width of the street frontage
- not to have residential activities at ground floor except for residential entrances, lobbies and accessways.

The street typologies are complemented by a list of assessment criteria, covering matters from façade modulation, avoiding blank walls, internalizing carparking, sleeving by smaller buildings, etc. The PC18 approach is characterized overall, however, by an emphasis on development controls.

Alternative option 2: Status quo - Retain existing quarter and precinct urban design rules and assessment criteria and City Centre wide urban design rules and assessment criteria

Overview

Refer to section 4 and Appendix 1 for a summary of existing provisions that relate to the management of the ground and lower floor facades of buildings.

Strengths

- Provisions are tailored to the unique characteristics of each of the City Centre's quarters and precincts.
- The use of assessment criteria, rather than just (or largely) development controls, allows a context specific analysis of the appropriateness of a design solution.

Weaknesses

- The number of development controls and assessment criteria (and, in some instances, minor differences between them) across the different quarters and precincts of the City Centre leads to a potential lack of clarity what desired urban design outcomes are.
- The modification of the District Plan over time has resulted in parts of the city subject to provisions introduced through more recent plan changes having more targeted provisions compared to areas regulated through earlier plan changes (eg: the Britomart Quarter compared to the Viaduct Harbour).

- Regulating the lower / ground floors of buildings in Part 5 areas and, in some aspects, in the quarters and precincts, by assessment criteria, can lead to inconsistent built outcomes.
- No modifications to existing provisions would fail to tailor the Plan to the continuing change of the City Centre's built environment.

Appendix 1 – Minimum frontage heights

Desired urban design outcome

- City Centre streets that are framed by buildings with frontages of a sufficient height to provide an appropriately urban edge to the street and sense of containment and enclosure.

Urban design issues relating to frontage height

- Many City Centre streets are edged by buildings that have very low frontages in proportion to the width of the streets they face. In some cases buildings frontages are only one storey in height. To provide an appropriate urban setting a desirable relationship between the width of the street and the height of building frontages is around 1:1.

Existing regulatory controls

Several streets within the City Centre already have a requirement for minimum frontage heights. In the main, these are around the Queen Street Valley, Karangahape Road and Britomart area, and relate to ensuring that frontage heights are sympathetic to heritage buildings in these locations.

More recent plan changes introduced minimum frontage heights to other parts of the City Centre such as parts of the Victoria and Wynyard Quarters. Plan Change 2 introduced a requirement for minimum 13m frontages to narrower streets in the Victoria Quarter such as Centre Street and Adelaide Street – the width of these streets being around 12-13m. It also introduced a requirement for a minimum 19m frontages to wider streets such as portions of Nelson Street – which has a width of 28-30m.

Options

Preferred option: Apply a new rule requiring a minimum 13m or 19m frontage height for buildings to specified streets in the City Centre. **Refer** map in appendices: City Centre proposed minimum frontage heights.

Note: Any minimum frontage heights shown on the map are not applicable where a height in relation to boundary control applies.

Detail

This option extends the rationale behind Plan Change 2 across the City Centre: namely the broad principle of a minimum 19m frontage to wider city streets and a minimum 13m frontage to narrower city streets. The principle is modified in certain instances, such as applying a 13m minimum frontage height to streets away from the city core, even where the width of the street might otherwise accommodate a 19m frontage.

Strengths

- Over time, such a development control will result in City Centre streets that have an appropriately urban sense of containment and enclosure.
- A minimum 19m frontage height is in fact significantly less than the width of many City Centre streets, which are around the 30m mark. While these streets could accommodate greater frontage height and still feel comfortable, a requirement for a lower frontage height is more practicable in the context of market realities.

Weaknesses

- A minimum 13m frontage height, proposed to be applied to many City Centre streets, anticipates buildings of 3-4 storeys in height. This urban design outcome, while desirable, needs to be balanced against whether, in a financial sense, it is reasonable to require developers – in terms of market demand - to provide buildings of this height.

Alternative option 1: Introduce a requirement for a minimum 8m frontage height to those streets currently not subject to a minimum frontage height control.

Strengths

- Provides a certain (but very limited) sense of enclosure to streets that currently have no applicable control.
- 8m accommodates a two storey building. This is highly flexible for an owner of City Centre land.

Weaknesses

- As noted, while 8m provides a degree of enclosure, it is extremely limited.

Alternative option 1: Status quo

Strengths

- Retains a high degree of flexibility for owners of sites to which no minimum height frontage control currently applies.

Weaknesses

- Retains inconsistency of approach between those parts of the city that have such controls and those that don't.

Appendix 2 – Minimum ground floor height

Desired urban design outcome

- Contributing to the adaptability of City Centre buildings by ensuring that the ground floor of new buildings is constructed to a height greater than floors above, sufficient to facilitate adaptability and change of use of the ground floor over time, positively contribute to the amenity of the building, and to the quality of the streetscape.

Urban design issues relating to ground floor height

- Business uses to the ground floor of buildings typically benefit from stud heights greater than to floors above. Higher studs allow greater light penetration into the interior of the building, improving its general amenity. Buildings with ground floors built to a minimal height have reduced flexibility in terms of the range of businesses and wider uses they can accommodate over time.
- The elevation of buildings benefits from a visual emphasis on the ground floor – as this is the part of the building most proximate to the largest viewing audience. A positive contribution to this emphasis can be achieved both through architectural articulation and modulation of the ground floor façade and also by a stud height that is more generous than upper floors, creating an appropriate sense of proportion to the building façade when viewed from the ground.
- There is an inconsistency of approach to minimum ground floor height within parts of the City Centre, leading to the probability of inconsistent outcomes. The District Plan applies a minimum ground floor height development control to some Quarters in the City Centre, but the majority of the Centre's Quarters and Precincts, notably including the prime retail areas of the Queen Street Valley and Karangahape Road, have no applicable development control.



Corner of Blake Street and Prosford Street, Ponsonby (Isthmus example)

The photograph above shows a clear example of where there is a lack of proportion to the building's façade. The upper floors of the building appear to have a higher stud than the ground floor, making the building appear top heavy and the ground floor to look squeezed.

Existing regulatory controls

Three Quarters in the City Centre have a development control specifying a minimum ground floor height. These are as follows:

- Victoria Quarter: *14.10.8.5(a) Ground floor space in all new buildings fronting a street, through-site link or public open space shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 4m for a minimum depth of 10m.*
- Wynyard Quarter: *14.9.11.6(a) Ground floor space in all new buildings abutting any existing or proposed street or public open space is to be designed to provide a minimum floor to floor height of 4m with a minimum depth of 6m and a minimum average depth of 8m per building frontage.*
- Britomart Quarter: *14.6.7.3(d) The height from ground floor to ceiling shall be not less than 4m.*

The common factor between the three development controls is the reference to a minimum 4m ground floor height. There is a difference between the controls, however, as to whether this is measured from floor to ceiling or floor to floor. The Wynyard Quarter rule measures the 4m from floor to floor whereas the Victoria and Britomart Quarters' rules measure it from floor to ceiling.

The effect of the difference of measuring the specified 4m from either floor to ceiling or floor to floor means that the Victoria and Britomart Quarters, to which the former applies, have the greatest actual required minimum ground floor height. This is because a floor to ceiling measurement does not include the depth of the floor plate for the level above, whereas a floor to floor measurement does. A floor plate is typically around 0.3m in depth, to around 0.5 – 0.6m, when space for services below the floor plate is accommodated.

This means that if the rules for the Victoria and Britomart Quarters were expressed in terms of a floor to floor measure, they would in fact require approximately a 4.5m minimum height to equal the specified 4m floor to ceiling height.

The Wynyard Quarter rule, if expressed in terms of a minimum floor to ceiling measure, would require a minimum height of 3.5 – 3.7m.

The effect of this, depending on where the 4m is measured from, the difference in actual ground floor height between the Quarters can be up at 0.5m.

The development controls also differ in terms of whether a minimum depth for the minimum ground floor height to apply to is specified. The Britomart Quarter rule does not specify a depth, so the rule would apply to the entire ground floor; whereas the Victoria Quarter and Wynyard Quarter specify a minimum depth of 10m and a minimum depth of 6m / minimum average depth of 8m respectively.

Options

Preferred option: Apply a new rule across the City Centre: 'Ground floor space in all new buildings fronting a street through-site link or public open space shall have a minimum floor to floor height of 4.5m for a minimum depth of 10m.'

Strengths

- Using a floor to floor measure gives greater certainty and consistency than a floor to ceiling measure. A 'ceiling' may mean the underside of the floor plate above or a drop ceiling.
- A minimum 4.5m floor to floor measure is effectively the same as the minimum 4m floor to ceiling measure that currently applies in the Victoria and Britomart Quarters, however it takes into account the depth of the floor plate / services.
- Applying the minimum height for a minimum depth of 10m is a depth sufficient for adaptability to a range of uses.

Weaknesses

- Increased development costs for sites to which a minimum ground floor height development controls does not currently apply.

Alternative option 1: Apply a new rule across the City Centre: 'Ground floor space in all new buildings fronting a street through-site link or public open space shall have a minimum floor to ceiling of 4m for a minimum depth of 10m.'

Strengths

- Established precedent in directly replicating the Victoria Quarter rule.
- Applying the minimum height for a minimum depth of 10m is a depth sufficient for adaptability to a range of uses.

Weaknesses

- Increased development costs for sites to which a minimum ground floor height development controls does not currently apply.
- Lack of clarity as to what a 'ceiling' is: ie – underside of floor plate or drop ceiling.

Alternative option 2: Apply a new rule across the City Centre which links a requirement for the ground floor space in all new buildings fronting a street through-site link or public open space to have a minimum floor to floor height of 4.5m for a minimum depth of 10m to specified frontages – for example: those frontages to which a minimum glazing development control (as proposed by this report) applies.

Strengths

- Reduces construction costs for developers in parts of the City Centre where it might be argued that there is a lesser imperative for building adaptability, building amenity, and high quality streetscapes.

Weaknesses

- Is not consistent with a strategic approach that all parts of the City Centre should have buildings that are adaptable, have good amenity and contribute to a quality streetscape.

Alternative option 3: Status quo.

Strengths

- No additional development costs for sites to which a minimum ground floor height development controls does not currently apply.

Weaknesses

- Retains the current inconsistency of approach across the City Centre to minimum ground floor height.

Appendix 3 – Ground floor at maximum height above street level

Desired urban design outcome

- Encouraging active street frontages by ensuring that the maximum height (or depth) of any portion of a ground floor plate above (or below) the adjacent portion of footpath is proximate to the footpath.
- Ensuring universal access to the main ground floor entries of City Centre buildings.

Urban design issues relating to ground floor plates

A large number of the City Centre's streets are sloped. Examples include Queen Street from Mayoral Drive to Karangahape Road, Wellesley Street, Victoria Street and Shortland Street. A challenge for developers and architects on sloping sites on these streets is achieving a balance between floor plates that are of commercially attractive dimensions while ensuring that the ground floor plate does not protrude too far out of the ground as the footpath level falls.

Realising this balance has been met with varying degrees of success by City Centre buildings. In some cases, the tension between large (ie: highly flexible) floor plates and ensuring the ground floor of a building is close to the footpath has swung significantly in favour of large floor plates. In these cases, examples can be seen where the building façade adjoining the part of the ground floor that juts above street level is a blank wall. In some cases, this area is used as a vehicle entry point to basement parking.

Successful examples of development on sloping sites include:



Shortland Street Towers (51-65 Shortland Street)

This site has a frontage to Shortland Street of approximately 61m. A relatively successful interface with the footpath is achieved by a ground floor plate split into two levels. The floor plate projects approximately 1.2m above the corner of Shortland Street and Fields Lane – still below average eye level for a pedestrian on the footpath and so retaining intervisibility between street and site interior.



Shortland Chambers (68-70 Shortland Street)

This site has a frontage to Shortland Street of approximately 32m. A relatively successful interface with the footpath is achieved by:

1. Accommodating a retail unit within the space under the main ground floor plate of the development
2. Creating a physical and visual gap between the ground floor plate and the street façade to the building with glazing extending to near footpath level over the length of the frontage.

Unsuccessful examples include:



Apartment building (415-427 Queen Street)

This site has a frontage to Queen Street of approximately 45m. The ground floor plate extends over the length of the site frontage. This means that floor space at the higher end of the site is below street level and above street level at the lower end of the site by around 2m (using the entry steps as a visual reference point).



Apartment building (508 Queen Street)

This site has a frontage to Queen Street of approximately 27m. A single ground floor plate extends over the length of the site frontage, with it closest to the footpath at the higher end of the site. The level difference (approximately 3-3.5m) at the lower end of the site between the ground floor plate and the footpath results in a blank wall approximately 6m in length and a vehicle entry point.

As can be seen from the photo above, a related issue is steps to the main pedestrian entries to the ground floor of buildings. This is a fundamental universal access issue that must be addressed.

Existing regulatory controls

The Victoria Quarter is the sole part of the City Centre to have a provision which is targeted at minimising the separation distance between ground floor plates and the footpath.

Rule 14.10.8.5(b) requires: *'The ground floor within all buildings in the Pedestrian Orientated Area adjacent to a street or through-site link, shall be at mean street level.'*

The Explanation to this rule is given as: *'The purpose of this control is to provide a built environment that will encourage active street frontages throughout the Quarter and in particular within Pedestrian Orientated Areas.'*

The practical effect of the rule means that the height of the site to the street frontage is averaged with the ground floor plate being at this height. The two developments below have been built since this rule became operative.



Telecom building (167 Victoria Street West)

This site has a frontage to Victoria Street West of approximately 86m. The development is split over two floor plates. The western end of each floor plate is above the footpath by 2-3m.



162-170 Victoria Street West

This site has a frontage to Victoria Street West of approximately 37m. The ground floor plate extends over about two thirds of the street frontage, with the remaining third occupied by a parking garage entry and services. At the higher (eastern) end of the site, the floor plate is slightly below the level of the adjacent footpath. At the lower end of the site, adjacent the parking garage entry, the floor plate is about 1.4m above the adjacent footpath.

There is no rule which requires the main entrance of a building to be flush with the footpath.

Analysis

The photographs above are representative examples from City Centre sites where there has been varying degrees of success in ensuring the ground floor plate of a building is as close to the footpath as possible in order to facilitate activation of the street.

The Victoria Quarter's rule 14.10.8.5(b), which requires the ground floor to be at mean street level, has shown some positive results in the development of two recent buildings (167 and 162-170 Victoria Street West). However, these two buildings still have portions of their floor plate that are 1.4-3m above the adjacent footpath. Ideally, they would be closer to allow views through glazing into the interior of the buildings.

Options

Preferred option: Apply a new rule across the City Centre:

'The ground floor within all buildings is to be flush with the adjacent street, through-site link or public open space for a minimum 10m depth from the frontage. On areas of slope, no point of the ground floor to the first 10m of its depth shall be higher or lower than 1.2m above or below the adjacent boundary with the street, through-site link or public open space.'

Regardless of the slope of the site, the main entry to the ground floor of a building shall be completely flush with the street footpath.'

Strengths

- Acknowledges that the City Centre has areas both of relative flatness and others of slope by a general requirement for ground floor plates (to 10m depth) to be flush with the adjacent public boundary, allowing deviation of up to 1.2m to cater for sloped sites.
- 1.2m is a distance that would allow intervisibility between pedestrians and the activities within the interior of the building.
- Using a quantifiable measure (1.2m) is a more direct method of ensuring ground floor plates are closer to the street. The issue with using 'mean street level' (as per rule 14.10.8.5(b) is that Central City sites typically have longer street frontages where the mean street level may be either a sizeable distance above or below the adjacent footpath (outside the 'human scale').
- The rule would also apply to any public open space.
- Developers typically choose to stagger the floor plates of buildings on the City Centre's sloped sites anyway, so the introduction of this rule would not be overly onerous.
- Applying a minimum depth of 10m acknowledges allows flexibility to developers for areas of floorplate beyond this.
- Ensures that the main pedestrian entry points to buildings are universally accessible.

Weaknesses

- Some reduced flexibility for new developments on sloping sites.
- Possibility of increased challenges in accommodating basement parking on sloping sites.

Detail

The following two examples show how this rule would apply to two City Centre sites on sloped streets.

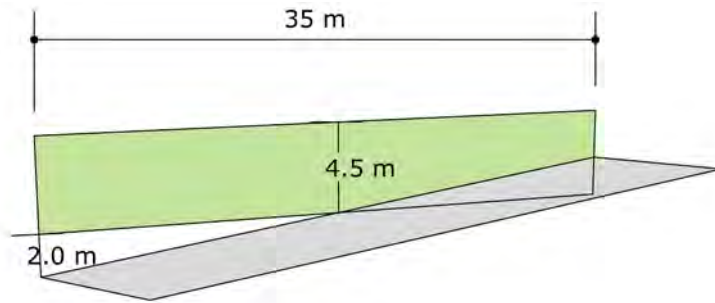
Example 1: 500 Queen Street



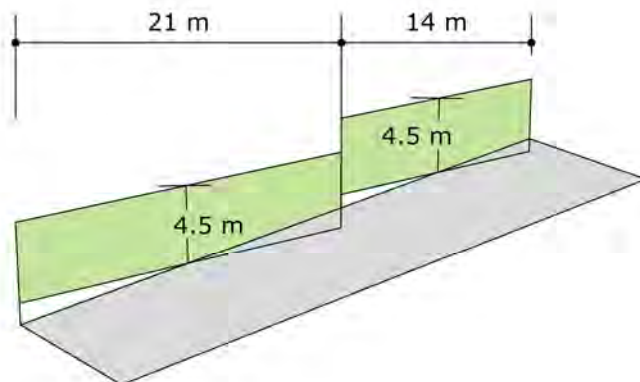
500 Queen Street

This site, on upper Queen Street north of Karangahape Road, is 35m in length. The fall from the top of the site to the bottom is 4m. In the schematics below:

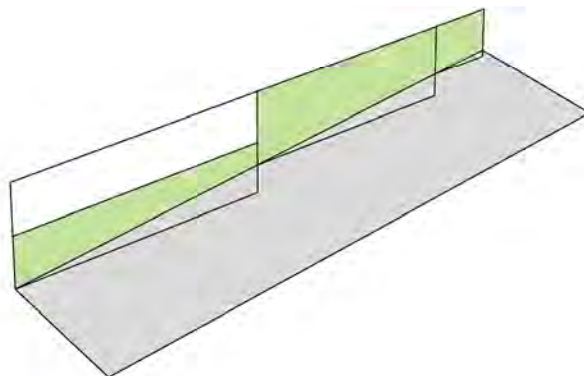
- (A) shows the application of the minimum 4.5m ground floor height recommended elsewhere in this report
- (B) shows the application of the minimum 4.5m ground floor height AND the application of the recommended rule: ground floor plate no greater than 1.2m above or below the adjacent boundary
- (C) shows the proposal approximately as built.



(A) 4.5m above mean ground level



(B) 4.5m above mean ground level + max 1.2m above / below ground level



(C) As built

Comment

(A) shows what might occur on this site, if redeveloped, with no control on how the ground floor plate addresses the street. A continuous 35m floor plate is possible, with the likelihood of a blank wall to the lower portion of the frontage, 2m in height.

What is interesting to observe is the similarity between (B) applying the proposed maximum 1.2m above or below ground level rule and (C) the as-built development.

Complying with the rule requires the ground floor plate to be split into two. Interestingly, the developer of this building has split the floor plate into three, the upper section accommodating a loading area, showing the rule would not be onerous on this site.

Example 2: 151 Queen Street

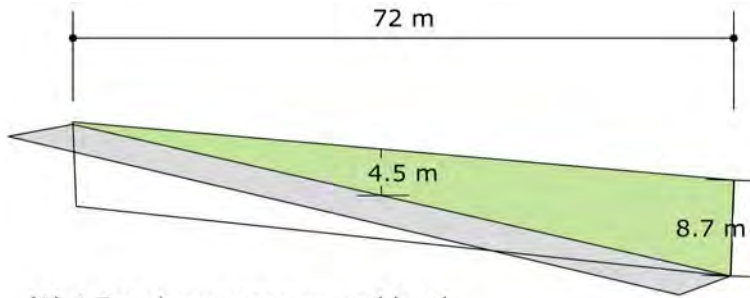
This site, in mid Queen Street, has a 72m frontage to Wyndham Street. The fall along its Wyndham Street frontage is 8.7m.



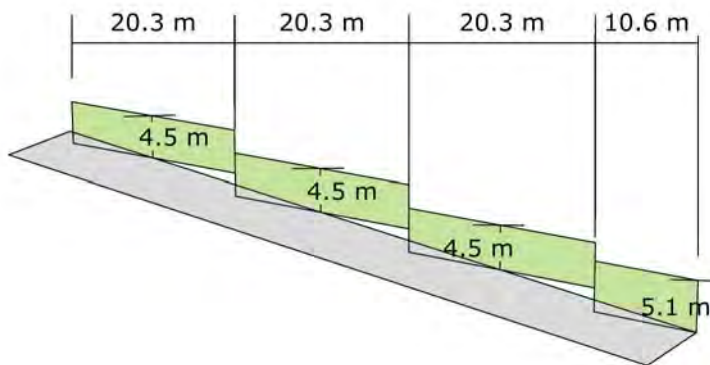
151 Queen Street

As with Example 1, in the schematics below:

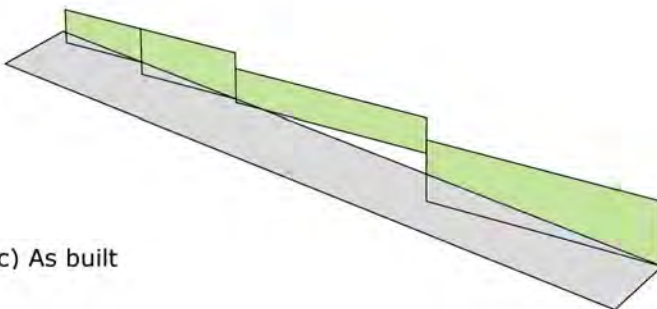
- (A) shows the application of the minimum 4.5m ground floor height recommended elsewhere in this report
- (B) shows the application of the minimum 4.5m ground floor height AND the application of the recommended rule: ground floor plate no greater than 1.2m above or below the adjacent boundary
- (C) shows the proposal approximately as built.



(A) 4.5m above mean ground level



(B) 4.5m above mean ground level + max 1.2m above / below ground level



(c) As built

Comment

The first point to note is (A) shows an improbable development form, as a developer of a City Centre building in this location would be unlikely to sacrifice a greater degree of interface along a 72m street frontage in favour of one continuous floor plate.

As with Example 1, (B) and (C) show the similarity between the application of the proposed 1.2m maximum above or below the adjacent boundary rule and the as built development.

(B) shows that on Wyndham Street, a development that complies with the rule allows floor plates of approximately 20m. The portion to Queen Street is shallower, but sufficient to accommodate a retail unit.

Alternative option 1: Apply rule 14.10.8.5(b) across the City Centre.

Strengths

- Rule 14.10.8.5(b) is an operative provision that has been tested through the submission process.
- Benefits for pedestrian amenity of applying a rule aimed at reducing level distances between the ground floor of buildings and the footpath across the City Centre, rather than just one location (the Victoria Quarter).

Weaknesses

- Where applied to sites on sloped streets with longer street frontages, applying a 'mean street level' could still result in a high degree of separation of the ground floor plate from the adjacent street.

Alternative option 2: Retain the status quo

Strengths

- Continued flexibility for developers of sites to construct large (and therefore flexible / economic) ground floor plates.

Weaknesses

- Risk of new developments that display lengths of blank walls at street level where the ground floor plate rises above the adjacent footpath.

Appendix 4 – Verandahs

Desired urban design outcome

- Protection from wind, rain and sun in areas of high pedestrian footfall.
- Verandahs of a design that masks the collection of dirt.

Urban Design issues relating to verandahs

- Ensuring there is sufficient continuity of cover within the existing and planned high amenity pedestrian areas of the Central City and the main pedestrian routes into and out of the City to surrounding residential areas.
- In recent years, the use of glazed street verandahs has risen. These can have the benefit of bringing additional light to the ground level street environment. However, they can also make highly visible accumulated dirt and dust.

Options

Preferred option:

(1) Amend Central Area District Plan Figure 6.13 by adding a verandah control to those frontages shown on the map within the appendices entitled: City Centre proposed frontages subject to verandah control.

(2) Introduce a rule requiring glass verandahs to be patterned in a durable finish (such as fritted, or seraphic glass finish) in order to mask dirt, dust and windblown debris.

Extension of verandah control: Detail

Central Area District Plan Development Control 6.9 and Figure 6.13 sets out those frontages within the City Centre that require street verandahs.

I have reviewed Figure 6.13 to ascertain whether there is a need to apply the verandah control to additional frontages or, conversely, remove it from frontages to which it is currently applied.

My approach for the review was:

- a) As a general principle, verandah cover should be extended to as many frontages through the City Centre as possible. Verandahs are a key tool within the City Centre to provide pedestrian cover from wind, rain and sun. They reduce wind shear at street level from tall buildings. They can also help create a human scale on wider streets.
- b) In particular, a verandah control should apply to main pedestrian thoroughfares, particularly at the core of the City Centre, and significant pedestrian routes into and out of the Centre and between parts of the Centre.

- c) A verandah control may not be required where the character and qualities of the existing built and landscape environment are not conducive to, or would be undermined by, a requirement for street verandahs.

With this approach in mind, the following additions to Figure 6.13 are recommended:

- *Northern side of Victoria Street West between Halsey Street and Nelson Street*
Reason: Along main pedestrian route from Victoria Park and the inner suburbs of Freemans Bay and Ponsonby.
- *Southern side of Fanshawe Street between Halsey Street and Nelson Street*
Reason: Along main pedestrian route from Victoria Park and the emerging Wynyard Quarter into the lower Central City.
- *Southern side of Beach Road from around Stanley Street to Anzac Avenue*
Reason: Along main pedestrian route from Parnell.
- *Extending the verandah control east along Quay Street to Tangihua Street*
Reason: Extends cover along the main waterfront boulevard. Reinforces existence of existing verandah on new Les Mills / carparking building.
- *Sale Street*
Reason: Extends verandah cover into an area which is largely devoid of it – the Centre Street, Adelaide Street area.
- *Union Street to near the intersection with Wellington Street*
Reason: Union Street is a southern pedestrian entry point into the City Centre from Freemans Bay.
- *Northern side of Pitt Street*
Reason: Pitt Street is part of a pedestrian route for those walking between the Karangahape Road Precinct, Freemans Bay and the Victoria Quarter.
- *Wakefield Street*
Reason: Wakefield Street is a pedestrian route between the Aotea Precinct and the Symonds Street commercial and educational area. It also has a number of apartment buildings along it.
- *Southern side of Chancery Lane between O'Connell Street and Fields Lane*
Reason: Reinforces and builds on existing condition of street awnings.

Frontages where a verandah control is not needed

As noted, my general approach is that verandahs are desirable throughout the City Centre. However, there are some areas that are not part of a main pedestrian route that have a distinct quality that might be undermined by the addition of street verandahs. Examples include a number of streets in the Victoria Quarter, such as Centre Street and Adelaide Street. Other streets, such as Liverpool Street, Turner Street and City Road do not have a large pedestrian footfall and there is no strong rationale for verandahs along them.

Streets such as Symonds Street, with the implementation of the Central Connector and increasing student numbers around the AUT and University of Auckland campuses, have become important pedestrian thoroughfares. However, the

relatively open nature of the Symonds Street environment, with buildings – in the main – set back from the street, is not conducive to requiring street verandahs.

Additional frontages considered

Analysis showed that there were a number of additional frontages on main pedestrian routes that, prima facie, would benefit from application of the verandah control. However, further analysis has indicated that the combination of street trees on these streets and the lack of footpath space would make verandahs difficult to construct. They would need to have a series of 'cut outs' to work around the street trees or be of such a narrow width to avoid the tree canopy that their utility would be limited.

Streets that fall into this category are:

- Nelson Street, with the exception of the western side between Cook Street and Union Street
- Halsey Street between Fanshawe Street and Victoria Street West
- Mayoral Drive.

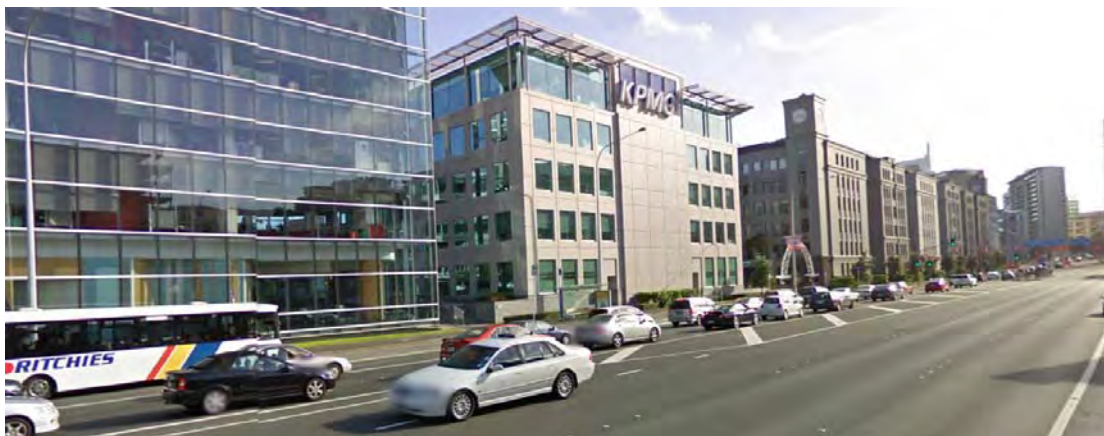
Refer Annexure A for photo street views of the above.

Street verandahs were also considered along the north side of Fanshawe Street and along Federal Street. Consideration was given to removing the existing verandah control from the northern side of Customs Street East between Commerce Street and Roukai Lane. Refer to the detailed discussion below.

Discussion

Fanshawe Street

A verandah control along the north side of Fanshawe Street, between Halsey Street and Market Place, was considered, as it would have the benefit of achieving continuous pedestrian cover from the lower CBD through to Victoria Park and the Wynyard Quarter. However, the setback of the buildings behind a grass berm planted with street trees makes the practicality of a street verandah control somewhat low. The addition of a verandah control on the southern side of Fanshawe Street, proposed by this report, is sufficient.



North side of Fanshawe Street

Federal Street

Federal Street stands out as a solitary street within the core of the City Centre which is not currently subject to a verandah control. Pedestrian footfall on the street is likely to be as high, or higher than, other streets within the Centre to which the control applies.

Also of note are council plans to upgrade the Federal Street streetscape within the medium term. Requiring verandahs to building frontages to Federal Street is possibly a complementary avenue to raise the street's amenity.

Countervailing factors include street verandahs could lower daylight levels to ground level on what is a relatively narrow street (noting, however, that Federal Street is no narrower than streets such as High Street, to which a verandah control applies).

On the whole, however, applying a verandah control along the length of the street could limit the opportunities presented by a future upgrade of the streetscape. Furthermore, all side streets have verandah cover, so the majority of pedestrians will only be uncovered for short segments of their journey.

From building line to building line there is limited room to fit in elements such as street trees – the viability of which would be further reduced by requiring street verandahs. A more flexible approach is not applying a control. This does not thwart owners of Federal Street buildings, if they wish, voluntarily erecting verandahs.

Customs Street East

Consideration was given to removing the existing verandah control from a group of buildings on the northern side of Customs Street East between Commerce Street and Roukai Lane. It was considered that the quality of the view up from the street to the facades of these heritage buildings is such that it should be retained.

Removing this control, however, would create a gap in council's aspiration for longer term continuous verandah cover in this core part of the City Centre. The reality, however, is that a verandah control applying to these buildings, recently upgraded and restored, would be highly unlikely to be triggered. Nonetheless, retaining the control to these frontages signals council's strategic intent for comprehensive verandah cover.



Customs Street East frontages

Durable patterned finish on glass verandahs: Detail

As noted earlier, there has been a rising use of glass verandahs over the last two decades attached to new City Centre buildings. Glass verandahs can be beneficial in bringing additional light into the footpath environment beneath the verandahs. However, where entirely glazed with clear glass, these verandahs readily show an accumulation of dust and dirt.

The City of Sydney uses the following wording to address this issues, in its Awnings Policy 2000:

'Glass in awnings... must be patterned in a durable finish (such as fritted, or seraphic glass finish) in order to mask dirt, dust and windblown debris.'

This wording is recommended to be incorporated into amendments to the verandah control.

Strengths

- Extending the verandah control to main pedestrian routes into and out of the City Centre and bringing it further to the west to incorporate further parts of the Victoria Quarter supports council's strategic intent to improve the pedestrian environment of the City Centre.
- Requiring glass verandahs to be patterned will help mask dust and dirt.

Weaknesses

- There are likely to be gaps in the continuity of cover along some streets to which the verandah control is proposed. This is because some sites are unlikely to trigger the verandah control in the short or medium term, as they may have been recently redeveloped or have scheduled heritage buildings on them.

Alternative option: Retain status quo.

Detail

No changes to existing verandah provisions.

Strengths

- Certainty of application.

Weaknesses

- Not extending the verandah control is inconsistent with council's strategic intent to improve the pedestrian environment of the City Centre.

Appendix 5 – Ground floor residential units

Desired urban design outcomes

- Residential units are not desirable at ground level street, open space or through-site link frontages to main pedestrian routes. They are generally unoccupied during the day and require high levels of privacy that run contrary to achieving a highly active public realm.
- Residential units may be appropriate at ground level on street, open space and through-site link frontages that do not adjoin main pedestrian routes. Appropriateness of the unit will depend on an assessment demonstrating both that the public realm will not be adversely affected by the *use* and that the *design* of the unit's façade positively contributes to the public realm and achieves privacy for the residential occupier.

Urban Design issues relating to ground floor residential use

The issues below were gathered, in part, by a desktop review of representative residential buildings in the City Centre. **Refer** Annexure B.

Regulatory issues

As noted in the section below on regulatory controls, there are (with one exception) no specific controls in the Central Area District Plan that allow management of the form and appearance of ground floor residential use. There are a number of broader assessment criteria on the form of ground / street and lower level building facades. The broad nature of these criteria, however, means they offer no guidance on matters relevant to ground floor residential.

Design and amenity issues

Privacy

Residential units require greater privacy than most activities. Design / site layout methods to achieve privacy for ground floor residential units typically involves a combination of the following:

- Providing a balcony in front of the glazed face (to internal living areas) of the unit
- A setback from the street / open space / through-site link boundary to the balcony
- Raising the floor plate of the ground floor unit and balcony above that of the adjacent street / open space / through-site link to a height where pedestrians cannot see into the internal rooms of the unit.
- Introducing screening between the boundary and the balcony. Screening may be a combination of planting and a low fence or wall.

Providing privacy for ground floor residential units requires blocking views to the inside of the unit from the public realm through a 'mediation zone' typically provided by a planted setback and raised balcony. This is at odds with the wider aspiration in

the City Centre for building frontages that maximise visibility between private interior and public exterior in order to foster a quality public realm.

Adverse effect on public realm

A poorly designed ground floor residential unit can have an adverse effect on the quality of the street, open space or through-site link to which it fronts. At its extreme, this can be where the imperative to provide privacy for unit occupiers is addressed by blank or inactive boundary facades and walls, deadening the street.

Even where the design of a ground floor residential unit achieves a successful balance between privacy for residential occupiers and allowing some views from the street to within the site, ground floor residential *use* itself, depending on the context, can have a wider adverse effect on the street. Residential units do not generate a high level of activity. At ground level they will therefore lower the activity levels on the street, or within the open space / through-site link. This can have a detrimental impact particularly in parts of the public realm where the existing and / or desired level of activity is high.

Noting that this is context specific, conversely, in parts of the public realm where the existing and / or desired level of activity is low, residential units, where their interface is well designed, may have little (or indeed, a positive effect) on amenity. A positive impact can particularly result from the contribution to the public realm gained from a planted setback and the sense of surveillance provided from raised ground floor unit balconies.

Reduced flexibility for reuse of ground floor

As noted earlier, designing the ground floor of a building to appropriately protect residential use requires one or a combination of design techniques, such as a planted and / or screened setback to a raised balcony. These design techniques reduce the flexibility of a building's ground floor to be reused for more 'active' uses, such as retail, that are typically most effective with little to no setback, a ground floor level with the footpath and no screening.

Amenity for residential occupiers

Using the design techniques listed earlier of raising the ground floor plate, setting the unit back from the boundary and providing a degree of screening can produce acceptable, and even successful, results for ground floor residential units in terms of the amenity delivered for the occupiers of those units. This is dependent on context, however, with the difficulty of achieving high internal amenity increasing the greater the use of the adjoining public realm. Potential adverse effects for occupiers are not limited to privacy, but include noise and dust particulates.

Existing regulatory controls

This section summarises provisions within the Central Area District Plan that relate to managing ground floor residential use, both as an *activity* and in terms of its *form* and *appearance*.

Residential use, or 'Accommodation (Permanent and Non Permanent)' as it is defined in the District Plan, is permitted in the City Centre, in both the Pedestrian and

Less Pedestrian Orientated Areas, except to the extent that this is modified within the Plan's precincts and quarters.

Accommodation at ground floor level is non complying to streets within the Queen Street Valley, Britomart Quarter, Aotea and Karangahape Road, due to the limitation to ground floor food, beverage, retail and services to these frontages.

Accommodation is subject to consent within the Quay Park Precinct in order to manage reverse sensitivity effects on activity within the Port.

Accommodation is not provided for within the Port and Learning Quarters.

This leaves a number of street, open space and through-site link frontages within the City Centre to which ground floor Accommodation is a Permitted activity.

Certain parts of the City Centre are denoted within the Central Area District Plan as Residential Quarters. These are in the following areas: Myers Park / Greys Avenue, Whitaker Place, Eden Crescent / Emily Place, Day Street, and Lower Federal Street / St Patrick's Square.

The intent of these precincts is to maintain and develop an environment conducive to residential living. This is done by controlling the establishment of activities within these precincts that could generate adverse effects on Accommodation use.

There are no development controls in the Central Area District Plan specifically targeted to controlling the appearance and form of Accommodation at ground level.

Plan Change 2 brought a number of provisions relating to urban design and residential use into the Plan. Along with introducing a requirement for Restricted Discretionary consent for new building construction throughout the Central Area, except as modified by provisions within specified precincts and quarters, it introduced a number of urban design related assessment criteria. Several of these allow assessment of building frontages, particularly at street level.

However, no provisions were introduced by the Plan Change specifically tailored to the *appearance* and *form* of ground floor residential use.

The only provision in the Plan that pertains specifically to the appearance and form of ground floor Accommodation is an assessment criterion in the Wynyard Quarter. 14.9.9.1(i)(a) states that:

'Where accommodation is proposed at or near street level, it may be appropriate to set back building frontages to provide a degree of privacy and separation for residents and to accommodate private open space amenity within the site. Consideration of this street frontage typology is encouraged through the Integrated Development Plan process.'

In summary, in parts of some precincts and quarters in the City Centre, residential use cannot establish at ground level as of right due to limitations within the area to specified 'active' uses or in order to manage reverse sensitivity effects.

In other parts of precincts and quarters, however, and on any site outside a precinct or quarter, residential use at ground level is Permitted.

At a broad level, the District Plan enables council to manage the form and appearance of residential use at ground level, whether it is Permitted or requires resource consent, through assessment criteria that relate to new building construction. As a whole, new building construction requires resource consent in the City Centre's precincts and quarters and, via Part 5, outside these areas (Refer Appendix 1).

The District Plan has no development controls specifically tailored to managing the form and appearance of ground floor residential use. There are also no specific assessment criteria on this issue, with the exception of a criterion in the Wynyard Quarter.

Options

Preferred option: Introduce criteria for assessment of residential units at ground level street, open space or through-site link frontages throughout the City Centre (where Accommodation at ground level is currently a Permitted activity) as part of the general Restricted Discretionary activity assessment required for all new buildings [Refer below for proposed criteria].

Assessment of a proposal for ground floor residential to a street, open space or through-site link should consider the extent to which the design positively contributes to the public realm and achieves privacy and amenity for the residential occupier by:

- (1) *provision of a balcony in front of the glazed façade of the unit*
- (2) *a setback from the street / open space / through-site link boundary to the edge of the balcony*
- (3) *the setback from boundary to balcony is planted and a fence or wall on the boundary is provided that is low enough to allow direct sightlines from a pedestrian in the public realm to the front of the balcony*
- (4) *raising the balcony and floor plate of the ground floor unit above the level of the adjacent street / open space and through-site link to a height sufficient to provide privacy for unit occupiers while retaining the ability to overlook the public realm.*

The ground floor interface of the unit to the street, open space or through-site link should satisfy (1), (2), (3) and (4). A proposal that does not satisfy all 4 components may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that this is appropriate to the context and that the proposal will still achieve a high level of both pedestrian amenity and internal amenity for unit occupiers.

Guidance notes

Public realm aspects: Residential units are considered inappropriate to ground floor street frontages where there is a development control specifying a minimum percentage of ground floor glazing. This is consistent with the rationale behind the glazing control that street frontages to which the control is applied are those which have, or are anticipated to have, higher levels of pedestrian activity.

The degree to which the design of the frontage of the ground floor residential unit positively contributes to the public realm and achieves privacy and amenity for the residential occupier requires a case by case assessment of the interplay of the

factors outlined at (1) - (4) of the assessment criterion vis-à-vis the characteristics of the street, open space or through-site link.

As broad guidance, however, a setback of 0.3 – 1.5m to the edge of the balcony is appropriate. This allows sufficient room for a landscaped area. A ground floor balcony and floor plate raised 0.5 -1m above the level of the adjacent street, open space or through-site link is appropriate.

Strengths

- An assessment criterion approach allows consideration of ground floor residential units as part of the wider Restricted Discretionary activity consent required for new building construction.
- An assessment criterion rather than development control approach allows a context specific analysis, allowing consideration of both the wider context (ie: whether it is appropriate to front a residential unit to a given street, open space or through-site link) and design detail (the design of the interface).
- Setting out preferred components of design provides some guidance as to what a generally good design solution might be, while acknowledging that the appropriateness of all elements will depend on both context and the skilfulness of the design response.

Weaknesses

- An assessment criteria approach reduces certainty for applicants.

Alternative option 1: Require residential units at ground level street, open space or through-site link frontages to comply with specified development controls

This option would require proposals for ground floor residential units to streets, open spaces or through-site links to comply with specified development controls. Rules to ensure high quality ground floor units that positively contribute to the public realm, while achieving privacy for residential occupiers, would require:

- (1) a balcony of a specified depth in front of the glazed face of the unit
- (2) a specified setback from the street / open space / through-site link boundary to the edge of the balcony
- (3) the setback between boundary and balcony to be planted and with a fence / wall on the boundary line of a maximum specified height
- (4) the balcony and floor plate of the ground floor unit to be raised in between a specified minimum and maximum height above the level of the adjacent street / open space / through-site link.

Strengths

- A development control approach would give a level of certainty to applicants as to what is the 'benchmark' for design of ground floor residential units.

Weaknesses

- A development control approach would favour one particular solution as the standard for the design of ground floor residential units to street, open space

Alternative option 2: Retain status quo

Retaining the status quo would allow residential units to continue to establish (subject to the existing exclusions within parts of existing precincts and quarters) at ground level street, open space or through-site link frontages.

In the absence of specific provisions managing the form and appearance of units' interface with the public realm, reliance would continue to be placed on assessment criteria within each precinct, quarter or Part 5 area that allows consideration of the general design of building frontages and ground / lower levels.

Strengths

- Continued flexibility for land owners and developers.

Weaknesses

- Existing assessment criteria of possible relevance in the District Plan allow assessment of matters including creating high quality street frontages that respond to context and street level frontages that contribute to pedestrian vitality, interest and public safety, typically by 'maximising doors, windows and balconies fronting streets and other public open spaces.'

Many of these criteria have been introduced into the District Plan via Plan Changes that were notified and / or made operative since the worst examples of ground floor residential units were constructed in the early 2000s. Nonetheless, none of these criteria (with the possible exception of the Wynyard Quarter criterion 14.9.9.1(i)(a)) are tight enough or specifically attuned to give guidance or an appropriate level of control to council on the issues that arise from ground floor residential use.

Alternative option 3: Non complying activity status for ground floor residential units throughout the City Centre

This option builds on the view that ground floor residential units are incompatible with the public realm qualities desired for a major urban centre, such as Auckland's City Centre and that the ground floor of City Centre buildings should be the domain of trade and civic uses.

The philosophy behind this approach is that City Centre streets should be both urban and public. The use and perception of the street as a public place needs to be reinforced by activities on the private land that edges it that are public in nature. For example, businesses and services that facilitate the public moving between street and building interior. Residential units at ground floor run contrary to this, as they are, by their nature, private, essentially excluding the wider public. Allowing them at ground level undermines the public nature of the street.

Strengths

- Ensures that business, trade, services and other uses that are essentially public in nature, has greater freedom to locate within the City Centre.

- Reduces the possible future incidence of difficulty in retrofitting ground floor residential units to accommodate business use.
- Reduces the likelihood and extent of reverse sensitivity effects between ground floor residential units and adjacent ground floor business uses or those in close proximity.

Weaknesses

- Reduces development options on sites fronting quieter streets (lower levels of pedestrian activity / traffic) where ground floor business use are currently unviable.

Preferred option detailed analysis

The assessment criterion proposed in the preferred option address earlier identified urban design issues related to ground floor residential units, including regulatory issues (existing lack of relevant provisions), privacy and amenity for residential occupiers and effects on streets with high pedestrian use.

The issue of the design of ground floor units (provision of balcony, setback, screening, raised floor) reducing the flexibility of the ground floor to later be changed to other uses is not addressed. This is considered acceptable. Constructing ground floor units of a quality that delivers both a successful space to live in and positively contributes to the public realm necessitates a design that reduces their later flexibility. However, it is suggested that the number of ground floor residential units that are likely to seek consent are not of such a sufficient number that this reduction in building flexibility is cause for great concern.

Appendix 6 - Ground floor glazing

Desired urban design outcomes

- Levels of glazing to the ground level street, public open space and through-site link facades of buildings that allow views between building interior and exterior in order to contribute to the sense of activity and safety in the public realm.
- Levels of glazing that are appropriate to the neighbourhood, recognising the likely uses within the building and the existing and desired nature of the neighbourhood's public realm.
- Glazing that is treated as part of an integrated building design, contributing to a sense of rhythm and pattern of the façade and wider streetscape.

Urban Design issues relating to ground floor glazing

- A lack of ground floor glazing, in relation to the length of the façade, undermining the ability to see between the interior of the street and the exterior public realm, with associated detrimental effects on pedestrian amenity and safety, and street vitality.
- The design treatment of the ground floor façade, including how glazing is integrated, bearing no relationship to the design treatment of upper storeys of the building.

Refer Annexure C for examples

Options

Preferred option: Apply a:

- 75% minimum glazing development control to the City Centre's pedestrian routes of the highest significance
- 50% minimum glazing development control to significant pedestrian routes
- standardised glazing assessment criterion throughout the City Centre.
Recommended content for criterion as follows:

Building frontages to a ground level street, open space or through-site link must contribute to pedestrian vitality, interest and public safety. This includes a variety of architectural detail and maximising doors, window openings and balconies fronting streets and other public open space.

Frontages entirely of glass (curtain walling or continuous shop front glazing) are not encouraged at ground level adjacent heritage buildings as they can detract from the qualities of the heritage building.

Where feasible, restoration of original ground level detail should be included in plans for buildings adjoining heritage buildings or for alterations to heritage buildings.

Ground floor glazing that relates to the modulation and articulation of the upper storeys of the building, in terms of the arrangement of 'solid' material and 'void' glazing is encouraged.

Glazing development control: Detail

A requirement for a minimum of 75% glazing ('display areas or windows') for a 'retail frontage' is an Isthmus District Plan provision (8.8.1.3(B)) applied to Isthmus 'main streets' such as Broadway and Ponsonby. A requirement for a minimum of 50% glazing currently applies to parts of the Wynyard and Victoria Quarters and to some street frontages in the Isthmus District Plan's Newmarket Growth Area District Plan.

This option posits the application of these rules to the City Centre. Assumptions behind the option are that:

- A 75% control would be applicable only to the City Centre's 'highest order' pedestrian routes.
- A 50% control would apply to 'second tier' routes.
- The City Centre has a number of streets, public open spaces and through-site links that are not 'first' or 'second' order pedestrian routes and that applying a minimum glazing requirement to ground floor building facades in these areas is not necessary. However, a glazing assessment criterion in these areas would be appropriate.
- A standard assessment criterion on glazing should apply to all parts of the City Centre (also underlying those areas proposed to be subject to the 75% and 50% minimum glazing development controls).

The method to determine which frontages are to first, second or third tier routes was applying a 75% requirement to the Queen Street Valley and Karangahape Road Quarters, as the City Centre's prime retail areas. This control was also applied along Victoria Street West up to Hobson Street, recognising the strength of this east-west connection and along the southern end of Queen Street by Myers Park, to establish a strong link between Karangahape Road and lower Queen Street. It was also applied along parts of the Viaduct Harbour, in support of the public realm focus in this area

The 50% glazing development control was applied to those parts of the City Centre to which the rule already applied (parts of the Victoria and Wynyard Quarters). It was also applied to those streets which form a key supportive role to the core CBD, such as those west of Queen Street up to Hobson Street. And it was also applied to streets which perform a strong connector function between parts of the City Centre. For example:

- Wakefield Street between Queen Street and Symonds Street
- Vincent Street and the southern part of Hobson Street - important southern entry points into the city
- Beach Road, as an important eastern entry point into the city
- Anzac Avenue and Symonds Street, supporting this route's 'Central Connector' public transport function and the high student population in the area.

Refer map in appendices: City Centre proposed glazing control

Note: The frontages shown on the City Centre proposed glazing control map to which a 75% minimum glazing control is proposed, largely fit those to which an existing 'active use' rule within the District Plan (limiting uses to activities including food and beverage, retail and services) applies. There are some areas of divergence, however, where the proposed 75% minimum glazing control extends beyond frontages to which an active use rule applies. I do not consider it necessary to completely match the two by, for example, pulling back the 75% glazing control to the smaller area to which the active use rule applies. The area of divergence is minimal and ensures that new buildings to these particular frontages are future proofed to accommodate changes to more active uses as city businesses respond to increased pedestrian footfall.

City Centre wide glazing assessment criterion: Detail

The content of the proposed City Centre wide assessment criterion builds on elements present in existing criteria in the District Plan, including encouraging frontages that contribute to pedestrian vitality, maximising glazing, and restoring original ground level detail, with additional considerations such as relating the ground floor design to upper storeys.

A recommendation in an earlier draft of this report that part of the assessment criterion be glazing *'should be inset into the wall façade to create a three dimensional quality and feeling of depth, as opposed to a flat skin or wall'* has been deleted after further deliberation. The earlier wording of *'frontages entirely of glass (curtain walling or continuous shop front glazing) must not be used at ground level as they detract from the public realm'* has also been modified in this latest version.

Depth to a ground floor façade can be a valuable part of the pedestrian experience of walking along a City centre footpath. This is particularly the case along highly retail streets. Equally, however, glass skin facades, which have little or no depth, typically where designed as an integrated part of the building façade, can enrich the street environment. The new Deloittes Centre at the corner of Queen Street and Fort Street springs to mind. Refer to the photograph below.



Deloittes Centre, corner of Queen and Fort Streets

The reference to glass skin facades has been reworked from the existing criteria applying to the Queen Street Valley and Karangahape Road Precincts, extending it throughout the City Centre, to state that it is *not encouraged* adjacent heritage buildings. Again, the anticipated result here is not to prohibit glass skin facades adjacent heritage buildings. A beautifully resolved glass skin façade adjacent a heritage building can be an entirely appropriate result. The intent rather, is to

express council's view that such facades are not desirable unless designed to the highest standard.

Strengths

- A development control approach has the appeal of a clear link to what the desired environment is in these areas: a lively and active public realm.
- Distinguishing between first, second and third tier routes, with commensurate levels of required glazing, responds to the existing and desired levels of pedestrian amenity in the area concerned, while taking into account the type of activities likely to establish in the locality.
- A minimum 75% glazing development control to first tier pedestrian routes follows the precedent of the Isthmus District Plan retail frontage control.
- A minimum 50% glazing development control to second tier pedestrian routes follows the precedent of controls in the Wynyard and Victoria Quarters and Isthmus District Plan's Newmarket Growth Area Structure Plan.
- A standardised glazing assessment criterion applying across the City Centre is consistent with the wider public realm aspirations for the City Centre, encompasses those areas not currently subject to any glazing provision, such as the Viaduct Harbour, and would strengthen the existing glazing criterion that applies in the Queen Street Valley and K Road Precincts.
- No minimum glazing requirement to certain frontages recognises that there is not a need for such in all areas of the City Centre, especially where flexibility is appropriate or a 'gritty' urban character exists. Example areas include much of the Wynyard Quarter, south of K Road and the Liverpool Street / City Road area.

Weaknesses

- A rule based approach to glazing may not be appropriate in the context of the character and heritage of City Centre streets. I note, however, that the Isthmus District Plan 75% glazing control applies to streets in Auckland with similar character imperatives, such as Ponsonby Road.²
- A development control approach may mean developers 'work down' to the specified level of glazing. This might particularly be the case on frontages to where 50% minimum glazing is proposed, where the market may be willing to provide higher levels of glazing on certain streets.
- A single City Centre wide glazing assessment criterion that must be applicable to the range of desired outcomes across the city, is by necessity, somewhat higher level than the existing individual criteria that apply to certain precincts and quarters.

Alternative Option 1: Retain status quo.

Detail

Existing glazing development controls

² Consideration might be given, also, to the applicability of the control to scheduled buildings, consistent with the overall approach to heritage in the City Centre.

- Most precincts and quarters and the Part 5 areas in the City Centre do not have a minimum glazing development control. The Victoria and Wynyard Quarters are the exception to this.
- The Victoria Quarter provisions require (14.10.8.5(c)) that building frontages within the Pedestrian Orientated areas of the Quarter have a minimum of 50% of the ground floor adjacent to a street or through-site link (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies) to have clear glazing for at least 75% of their height.
- The Wynyard Quarter provisions require (14.9.11.6(b)) that the ground floor of all new buildings fronting any 'Special Character Frontage' have clear glazing for at least 50% of the ground floor building frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies). The 'Special Character Frontages' identified in the Wynyard Quarter are frontages to streets which are intended to have a greater pedestrian focus, for example: Jellicoe Street.

Existing glazing assessment criteria

- The Queen Street, Karangahape and Aotea Precincts have assessment criteria specifying that design at ground level must 'contribute to the continuity of pedestrian interest and vitality.' The criteria for these precincts specifically reference that 'frontages made entirely of glass (curtain walling or continuous shopfront glazing) must not be used at street level as they detract from the streetscape.' Furthermore, that 'Where feasible, restoration of original ground level detail should be included in plans for buildings adjoining heritage buildings or for alterations to heritage buildings.'
- The presumption for increased levels of glazing in the Victoria and Wynyard Quarters and Part 5 areas is higher, with assessment criteria in these areas requiring building frontages to not only 'contribute to pedestrian vitality,' but to maximise 'doors, window openings and balconies fronting streets and other public spaces.'
- Assessment criteria for the Britomart Quarter ('achieve a strong visual and physical integration of public and private space') and the Learning Quarter ('buildings should have interactive frontages where they face public streets') are pitched in the middle.
- The Viaduct Harbour and Ports have neither a development control nor assessment criterion relating to ground floor glazing.

Strengths

- Continued flexibility for land owners and developers.
- The current absence of a glazing development control in the Ports and Learning Quarter is appropriate and recognise the unique characteristics of these areas.

Weaknesses

- Retaining the present combination of glazing development controls and assessment criteria maintains a somewhat schizophrenic approach to the management of ground floor glazing, with inconsistencies and gaps across precincts, quarters and Part 5 Areas, depending, in part, on when plan changes brought new provisions into the District Plan. For example, the Viaduct Harbour

- The Part 5 areas have an assessment criterion that encourages maximisation of glazing. However, the relevant assessment criteria for the Queen Street Valley and K Road Precincts, which have higher levels of pedestrian activity, do not specifically encourage maximising glazing.
- There are no glazing provisions (either development control or assessment criterion) applying within the Viaduct Harbour.

Alternative Option 2: Retain status quo with minor modification: apply a 50% minimum glazing development control to all Part 5 areas.

Detail

- This option would retain the existing provisions relating to glazing but extend the Wynyard Quarter and Victoria Quarter 50% minimum glazing development control to Part 5 areas.

Strengths

- A development control approach to minimum glazing in Part 5 areas would give more certainty of outcome.
- Precedent has been established of a 50% minimum glazing development control in the Wynyard and Victoria Quarters and the Isthmus District Plan's Newmarket Growth Area Structure Plan.

Weaknesses

- Some Part 5 area neighbourhoods do not, in my view, require a minimum 50% glazing. I agree with the approach evident in the supporting reports to Central Area Plan Change 2 and Isthmus District Plan 196 that such a control is appropriate for and should be limited to frontages to more significant pedestrian thoroughfares and is not required in self-contained neighbourhoods that have lower degrees of pedestrian activity.
- Extending a 50% minimum glazing development control only to Part 5 areas would create the anomaly of no similar control in the Viaduct Harbour and parts of the Wynyard and Victoria Quarters.

Appendix 7 – Blank Walls

Desired urban design outcomes

- Minimal lengths of blank walls to ground level street, public open space and through-site link frontage of buildings in order to contribute to the sense of activity and safety in the public realm.
- Ensuring that where blank walls are necessary that they are appropriately articulated.

Urban Design issues relating to blank walls

- Longer lengths of blank walls to street, public open space and through-site link frontages reduce activity in the public realm and reduce actual and perceived levels of safety.
- Most parts of the Central City are currently not subject to any District Plan provision on blank walls.
- A minimum glazing control is unlikely to be entirely effective on its own in ensuring an effective mediation / transition between building interiors and exteriors. Glazing can be grouped in one segment of the building frontage leaving other stretches of the façade largely blank. Refer example below.



151 Queen Street

The photographs of the Wyndham Street frontage to 151 Queen Street above show glazing grouped to the corner with Queen Street. Around 60% of the remainder of the frontage is largely blank wall. The major 'break' in the wall is a vehicle entry point.

Options

Preferred option: Introduce an assessment criterion on blank walls across the City Centre. Suggested content as follows:

The extent to which blank walls are minimised to street, open space or through-site link frontages. Where a blank wall is necessary, it should make use of modulation, relief or surface detail.

Detail

This proposed criterion is based a provision in the Wynyard Quarter: 14.9.9.9.1 Public Open Space Frontages – General Design Principles.

Strengths

- Addresses issues around CPTED and reduced levels of activity in the public realm.
- More flexible than a development control approach of requiring compliance with a specified maximum length of blank wall.

Weaknesses

- Reduced flexibility for building design to frontages.

Alternative Option 1: A development control approach to blank walls. For example, specifying that the length of any blank wall must be no longer than 3.5m.

Strengths

- A development control approach very clearly communicates what are 'bottom lines.'
- 3.5m accommodates the dimensions of a reasonably sized room behind the frontage.

Weaknesses

- Difficulties in application due to issues with defining what a blank wall is.
- Questions as to the appropriateness of applying a specified maximum length of blank wall throughout the City Centre regardless of differences in characteristics, use and levels of pedestrian activity in the area.

Appendix 8 – Active uses

The District Plan currently requires certain 'active uses' to specified street frontages within the City Centre. For example, uses within frontages to certain streets within the Queen Street Valley and Karangahape Road Precincts are limited to food, beverage, retail and services.

These controls apply, in the main, to the retail and pedestrian heart of the City Centre. I consider the application of these controls appropriate to produce a high quality street environment reinforced by adjacent uses which produce a high level of footfall.

I do not consider there is a need to extend these controls to additional frontages.

Verandahs – photographs of street frontages

Recommended additions to verandah control



Northern side of Victoria Street West between Halsey Street and Nelson Street



Southern side of Fanshawe Street between Halsey Street and Nelson Street



Southern side of Beach Road from around Stanley Street to Anzac Avenue



Quay Street between Britomart Place and Tangihua Street



Sale Street



Union Street to near intersection with Wellington Street (1)



Union Street to near intersection with Wellington Street (2)



Union Street to near intersection with Wellington Street (3)



Northern side of Chancery Lane between O'Connell Street and Fields Lane

Comment: An addition of a verandah control on the southern side of Chancery Lane (to the left in the photo above) reinforces and strengthens the existing condition. The north side of Chancery Lane does not allow a street verandah due to the narrowness of the footpath.

Frontages where the application of a verandah control is desirable, but would interfere with street trees



Nelson Street (1)



Nelson Street (2)

Comment: Hobson Street, which runs parallel to Nelson Street, and performs much the same function, is subject to a verandah control within the Operative District Plan. Hobson Street pavements average around 4.8m. Nelson Street pavements are, however, generally narrower, ranging from around 3m to 4.4m.



Halsey Street between Fanshawe Street and Victoria Street West



Wakefield Street (1)



Wakefield Street (2)



Northern side of Mayoral Drive (1)



Northern side of Mayoral Drive (2)



Northern side of Mayoral Drive (3)

Representative examples of the street frontage ground level of City Centre residential buildings

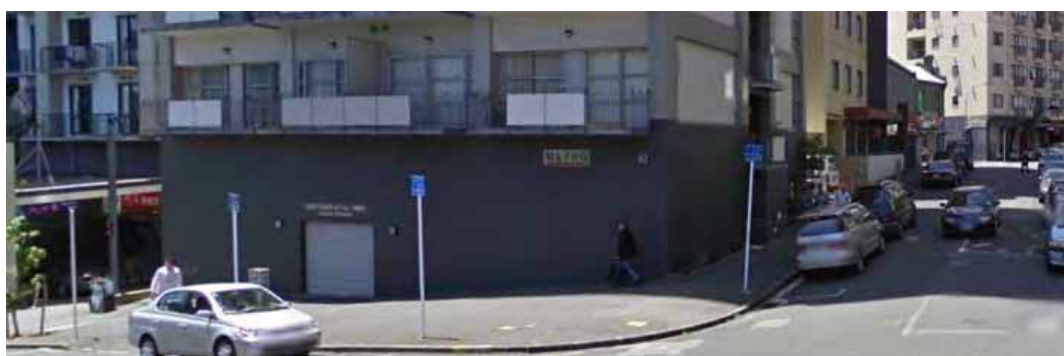
Early 2000s residential buildings



'Alpha Apartments': 17 Vogel Lane



196 Hobson Street



'Metro' apartments: 82 Wakefield Street



6 Scotia Place



147 Hobson Street



'Century on Anzac': 100 Anzac Avenue



135 Victoria Street West

Comment

These buildings were consented in the early 2000s before the notification of Plan Change 2. The majority of examples do not have ground floor residential, with the exception of 147 Hobson Street (in part) and 135 Victoria Street West. Nonetheless, the examples are interesting to demonstrate the poor quality built form that led to the development and notification of Plan Change 2.

135 Victoria Street West is the clearest example in the City Centre demonstrating the worst aspects of ground floor residential to a street frontage. The site is on a main pedestrian thoroughfare. Ground floor residential is inappropriate on such a route. The design of the interface affords inadequate privacy to ground floor unit occupiers or protection from perceived noise or vehicle particulates. The boundary wall has an adverse visual impact on the street and acts as a 'dead zone' in what should aspire to be a street lined by active / semi-active uses.

Residential buildings with (1) balcony, (2) setback, (3) screening (planting / low wall), (4) raised floor plate



75 Halsey Street

Comment

75 Halsey Street meets both steps in the preferred option for assessing ground floor residential units:

- (1) Halsey Street is not a main pedestrian route such that it would be adversely affected by ground floor residential units facing out to it
- (2) the design of the ground floor units incorporates the 4 elements necessary to positively contribute to the public realm and achieve privacy for residential occupiers: a setback, which is landscaped with a low wall, a balcony, raising the balcony and unit floor plate above ground level.

The City Centre has few similar examples.

Residential buildings with (1) setback, (2) screening (planting / low wall) and (3) raised floor plate



16 Mount Street (student accommodation)



10 Ronayne Street



201-203 Federal Street



13 Whitaker Place

Comment

The ground level residential units in the buildings above do not have balconies to the street. However, they generally show a well resolved interface to the street, using a combination of setbacks, screening (planting / low wall) and raised floor plates.

Ground floor residential units on the streets on which these buildings are located is appropriate, as these streets are not main pedestrian routes.

Residential buildings with (1) balcony and (2) raised ground floor



1 Parliament Street



55 Mahuhu Crescent



36 Day Street



29 Pitt Street

Comment

The ground level residential units in the buildings above have balconies (and / or open access corridors) to the street and raised floor plates. However, they do not have any setback or screening (planting / low walls).

In these examples, the overall result is generally less successful, with a detrimental effect either on street amenity, privacy for unit occupiers, or both. This suggests that a design solution that does not include a setback between balcony and boundary as a mediating space is less likely to be successful.

Residential buildings with raised ground floor (no setback, screening or balcony)

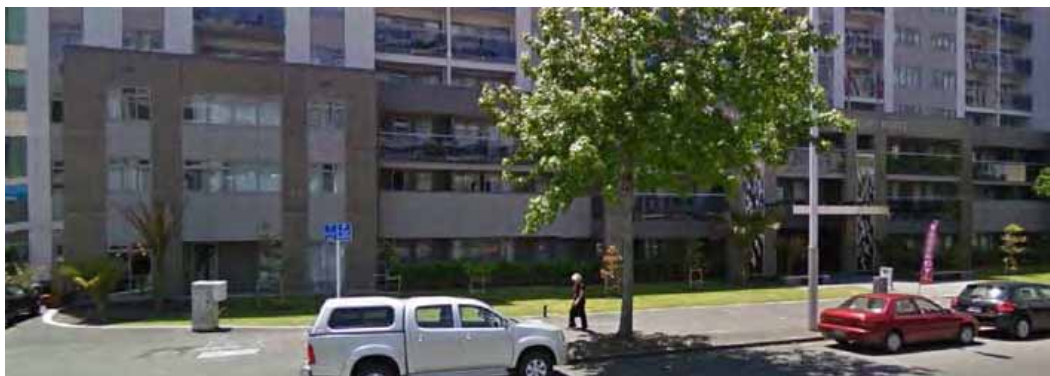


Hampton Court: 182 Federal Street

Comment

The example above displays the weaknesses of the development control option to prescribing a particular interface form for ground level residential units. Hampton Court, at ground level, is not setback from the street, has no landscaping and no balcony. Yet it still contributes to the street. It is noted, however, that a contemporary application for the same form of development may not be desirable due to the lower amenity it offers unit occupiers. Nonetheless, an assessment criteria approach would allow detailed analysis of any analogous proposal.

Residential buildings with (1) setback and (2) screening (no balcony or raised floor)



40 Beach Road

Comment

The example above, on Beach Road, is on an increasingly busy pedestrian route. This raises the threshold in terms of assessment as to the appropriateness of ground floor residential units. In this case, the units are for visitor accommodation. While there are no balconies and the ground floor plate is not raised, the building displays a relatively successful interface, with a generous setback and screen planting.

Residential reuse / conversion of existing building



14 Drake Street

Comment

14 Drake Street is a successful reuse of a character commercial building for residential use. Privacy is afforded at ground floor level by opaque glass.

Residential buildings with commercial ground floor



'Quest on Mount': 13 Mount Street



'Fiore on Hobson': 152 Hobson Street



205-209 Federal Street

Comment

None of the examples above have residential units at ground floor level. However, they show the increasing trend for apartment buildings to have ground floor commercial / retail units.

205-209 Federal Street was consented after the notification of Plan Change 2. The building form to mid and upper levels is poorly resolved. However, the ground floor retail units, percentage of glazing and overall modulation is generally positive.

International examples

The following are European examples of ground floor residential units. Refer the commentary below.







Comment

The photographs above demonstrate differing combinations of, and approaches to using, planted setback, raised ground floor level and balconies. The first two photographs show how even a minimal setback, enough to accommodate a planted mediation zone, can be sufficient.

Of importance, what the variety of approaches also demonstrate is how difficult it would be to have a rule based approach to achieving successful results.

Ground floor glazing of Central City buildings

A lack of ground floor glazing, in relation to the length of the façade, undermining the ability to see between the interior of the street and the exterior public realm



196 Hobson Street



Commercial building, corner Beach and Anzac Roads



Apartment / visitor accommodation building, corner Fanshawe and Hobson Streets

The design treatment of the ground floor façade, including how glazing is integrated, bearing no relationship to the design treatment of upper storeys of the building.



Darby Street, as viewed from Queen Street



Mixed use apartment tower, corner of Fort Street and Gore Street



118 Queen Street, corner of Vulcan Lane

Comment

The latter two examples above show a well considered integration of glazing into a ground floor frontage that reads as part of the façade above. The first example shows a slighter weaker response.

Appendix 9 – Central Area District Plan: Lower / Ground floor frontage provisions

	Victoria Quarter	Wynyard Quarter	Queen St Valley	Viaduct Harbour	Karangahape Rd Precinct	Britomart Quarter	Learning Quarter	Aotea	Quay Park	Residential Quarters	Ports	Part 5 activities
Activity status for new building construction / alteration to existing buildings	14.10.6.1 RD	14.9.6.6 RD	14.4.6.1 On those sites identified on Precinct Plan B: RD	14.7.6.1 RC		14.6.6.1 RD	14.12.6 RD	14.5.6.1 RD consent required for the erection of any new building or external alteration or addition to the street frontage of any existing building.	14.13.6(c) RD	14.1.6 RD (via rule 5.5.3)	14.8.6 RC for buildings above 18m in Area 3 on Precinct Plan A.	5.5.3 RD for the erection of any new building or alteration / addition to any existing building outside any of the precincts / quarters
Active use rule?	No	No	14.4.6 (a) For those sites identified on Precinct Plan A, the occupation of not less than 100% of the length and not less than 10m depth of the ground floor street frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies) shall be limited to the following activities: food and beverage, retail, services. (b) For those sites identified on Precinct Plan A, the occupation of not less than 70% of the length and not less than 10m depth of the ground floor street frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies) shall be limited to the following activities: food and beverage, retail, services.	14.7.7.2(c) Activities occupying the ground floor frontage of a site [on Precinct Plan D] identified as having a special character frontage shall be limited to those activities identified with an asterisk in Clause 14.7.6.1 [accommodation/non-permanent accommodation; entertainment/gathering; food and beverage; museums; retail where the gfa of any individual tenancy does not exceed 400m ² ; services; yachting, boating and harbor administration and ticketing facilities], except that (i) such activities shall occupy not less than 70% of the length and not less than 10m width of the ground floor frontage, (ii) this rule does not apply to the sites subject to the special character frontage located to the west of Customs Street West; (iii) the gfa of any individual tenancy does not exceed 400m ² ; (iv) the provision for accommodation / non permanent accommodation only applies to that part of the site described as Lot 2 DP 205351 fronting Customs Street	14.11.6.1(a) For any building fronting [K Rd] the occupation of not less than 100% of the length of the ground floor frontage and not less than 10m depth of the ground floor street frontage shall be limited to food and beverage, retail and services.	14.6.6.1(f) For those buildings indicated on Precinct Plan C as AAAA the occupation of not less than 100% of the length and not less than 10m of the depth of the ground floor frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays, pedestrian entrances and lobbies) is limited to the following activities: retail; food and beverage; services. (g) For those building frontages on Customs Street East indicated on Precinct Plan C as XXXX the occupation of not less than 70% of the length and not less than 10m depth of the ground floor frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays, pedestrian entrances and lobbies) is limited to the following activities: food and beverage; retail; services. (h) For those building frontages indicated on Precinct Plan C as OOOO, the occupation of not less than 75% of the ground floor frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays,	No	14.5.6(a) For those sites identified on Precinct Plan A, the occupation of not less than 100% of the length and not less than 10m depth of the ground floor frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies) shall be limited to the following activities: food and beverage; retail; services.	No	No	No	No

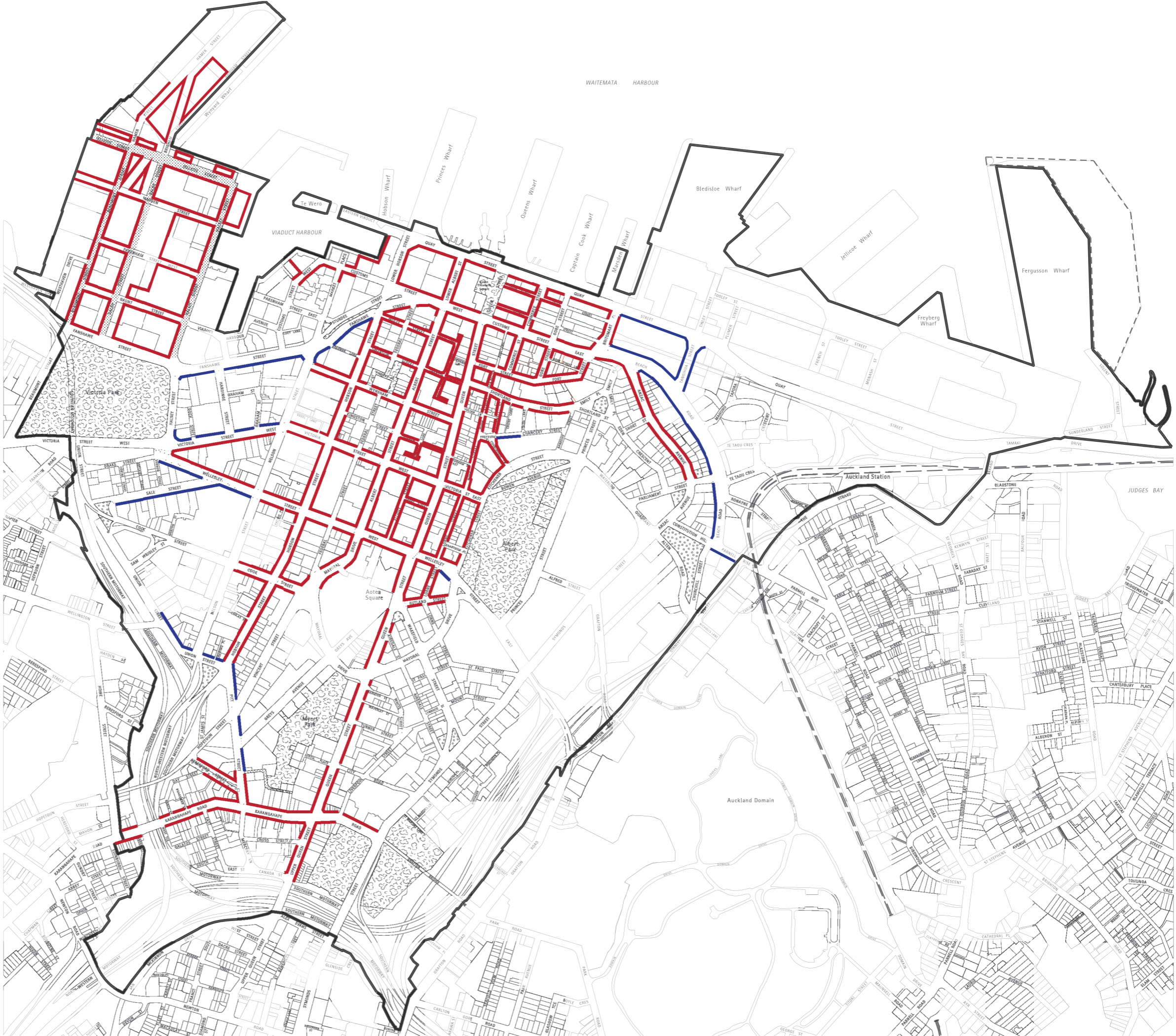
	Victoria Quarter	Wynyard Quarter	Queen St Valley	Viaduct Harbour	Karangahape Rd Precinct	Britomart Quarter	Learning Quarter	Aotea	Quay Park	Residential Quarters	Ports	Part 5 activities
				West which is identified as being subject to a special character frontage.		pedestrian entrances and lobbies) is limited to the following activities: food and beverage.						
Minimum glazing development control?	14.10.8.5(c) Within the Pedestrian Orientated areas of the Quarter a minimum of 50% of the building frontage width of the ground floor adjacent to a street or through-site link (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies) shall have clear glazing for at least 75% of its height.	14.9.11.6(b) The ground floor within all new buildings fronting any Special Character Frontage identified in Quarter Plan E shall: (i) be at mean street level (ii) have clear glazing for at least 50% of the ground floor building frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies).	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Minimum glazing assessment criteria?	14.10.7.2(1)(f) Building frontages at street level must contribute to pedestrian vitality, interest and public safety. This includes a variety of architectural detail and maximizing doors, window openings and balconies fronting streets and other public open space.	14.9.9.1.1(h) Building frontages at ground level must contribute to pedestrian vitality, interest and public safety. This requires a variety of architectural detail and maximizing doors, window openings, glazing, and balconies fronting public open space.	14.4.7.2(iv) Design at ground level must contribute to the continuity of pedestrian interest and vitality, particularly for those frontages where the activities under 14.4.6 applies. However, frontages entirely of glass (curtain walling or continuous shop front glazing) must not be used at street level as they detract from the streetscape. Where feasible, restoration of original ground level detail should be included in plans for buildings adjoining heritage buildings or for alterations to heritage buildings. (v) At upper levels, large expanses of blank walls must be avoided. In particular, the proportion of walls and windows on elevations should reflect any patterns existing in retained heritage buildings. This will tend to favour solid walls penetrated by a	No	14.11.7.1.1(b)(iv) Design at ground level should contribute to the continuity of pedestrian interest and vitality, particularly for those frontages where the activities under 14.11.6.1 applies. However, frontages entirely of glass (curtain walling or continuous shop front glazing) or of solid materials (including roller shutter doors of any size), must not be used at street level as they detract from the streetscape. Where feasible, restoration of original ground level detail should be included in plans for buildings adjoining heritage buildings or for alterations to heritage buildings. (v) At upper levels, large expanses of glass or blank walls must be avoided. This will tend to favour solid walls penetrated by a	14.6.6.3.1(viii) The ground floor of buildings adjacent to public spaces should make use of architectural elements of columns, windows, doors, verandahs, colonnades, and recessed entranceways to achieve a strong visual and physical integration of public and private space.	14.12.7(c)(i) Buildings and their uses should maintain and where practicable enhance the quality and usability of streets, the public realm and campus pedestrian linkages through appropriate building scale, design and location. Generally, buildings should have interactive frontages where they face public streets to enable a public experience of activities within the campuses. 'Interactive frontages' are frontages which enable some form of public view or experience of activities within the campus, whether through openings and glazed areas into internal campus spaces or indirectly through landscaping, façade design, or artwork expressive of campus activities.	14.5.7.1(g) Design at pavement level must contribute to the continuity of pedestrian interest and vitality, particularly for those frontages where the activities control under Clause 14.5.6.2 applies. However, frontages entirely of glass at street level (curtain walls or continuous shop front glazing) must not be used as they detract from the streetscape. Sympathy with (and where feasible, restoration of) original street level detail should be included for buildings adjoining heritage buildings or alterations to heritage buildings.	No However, note assessment criterion 14.3.7(b)(i): Building design and scale of building frontage should be sensitive to the design and scale of adjoining public streets, places and pathways. The design and character of the buildings should present a varied but harmonious and sympathetic frontage to public spaces and streets. Large expanses of blank wall at ground level should be avoided. [Emphasis added].	Question as to whether the Part 5 RD assessment criteria for new building construction apply via 14.1.6 and 5.5.3? If so, the following Part 5 assessment criterion applies: 5.6.3(d)(1)(f) Building frontages at street level must contribute to pedestrian vitality, interest and public safety. This includes a variety of architectural detail and maximizing doors, window openings and balconies fronting streets and other public open spaces.	No	5.6.3(d)(1)(f) Building frontages at street level must contribute to pedestrian vitality, interest and public safety. This includes a variety of architectural detail and maximizing doors, window openings and balconies fronting streets and other public open spaces.

	Victoria Quarter	Wynyard Quarter	Queen St Valley	Viaduct Harbour	Karangahape Rd Precinct	Britomart Quarter	Learning Quarter	Aotea	Quay Park	Residential Quarters	Ports	Part 5 activities
			pattern of windows above verandah level, articulation of floor levels and an appropriate treatment of the parapet level.		floor levels and an appropriate treatment of the parapet level.							
Continuous frontage development control?	14.10.8.4(a) The frontage of new buildings and additions to buildings on a site identified on Quarter Plan C must abut the street boundary for its entire length.	14.9.11.5(a) Except as required by rules 14.9.11.5(e), (f) and (g), the frontage of new buildings and additions to buildings on a site identified on Quarter Plan F must abut the street or public open space boundary for its entire length. (b) For the purposes of this rule 'frontage' means that part of the external wall of a building that occupies the length of the public open space boundary and which rises from that boundary to a height of no less than the minimum required under (a) of this rule, but excludes vehicle entrances, public open space, loading bays, pedestrian entrances and lobbies, window and balcony recesses and similar architectural modulations.	14.4.8.2(a) The frontage of a new building on a site identified on Precinct Plan B must abut the street boundary [...]	14.7.7.2 Any building on a site identified in Precinct Plan D as having a special character frontage shall generally comply with the following rules: (a) The façade of the building should generally follow the site boundary or boundaries identified as a special character frontage.	14.11.8.1(a) The frontage of a building shall abut the site boundary with [K Rd], Pitt Street, Queen Street, Upper Queen Street, Frances Street, Liverpool Street, or East Street to provide a continuous frontage along the full length of that boundary.	14.6.7.3(a) With the exception of vehicle entrances, loading bays, pedestrian entrances and lobbies, window and balcony recesses and similar minor architectural modulations, the façade of the building shall follow the site boundaries.	No	14.5.6(a) For those sites identified on Precinct Plan A, the occupation of not less than 100% of the length and not less than 10m depth of the ground floor frontage (other than vehicle entrances and loading bays and pedestrian entrances and lobbies) shall be limited to the following activities: food and beverage; retail; services.	No	No	No	No
Continuous frontage assessment criteria?	14.10.7.2.1(b) Buildings shall address and align to the street boundary to a height appropriate to define and enclose the street. However, minor modulation and variance of the frontage layout, such as recessed pedestrian entrances and windows is acceptable to avoid architectural monotony provided that the overall continuity of the frontage is not compromised.	14.9.9.1.1(i) Buildings shall address and align to the boundary at a height appropriate to define spatially and to enclose the public open space. However, minor modulation and variance of the building frontage, including recessed pedestrian entrances and windows, is acceptable to avoid architectural monotony provided that the overall continuity of the frontage is not compromised.	14.4.7.2(a) Buildings shall be designed to address and align to the street boundary. However, minor modulation and variance of the building frontage, including recessed pedestrian entrances and windows, is acceptable to avoid architectural monotony provided that the overall continuity of the frontage is not compromised.	14.7.6.2.1(a)(ii) The design and character of the buildings presenting a varied but harmonious façade to the public. Depth to building facades will be expected. This relates, for example, to the manner in which windows and doors are treated.	14.11.7.1.1(a) Buildings should be designed to address and align to the street boundary. Minor modulation and variance of the frontage layout, such as recessed pedestrian entrances, is encouraged to avoid architectural monotony.	14.6.6.3.1(i) Buildings should be designed to address and align to street boundaries and adjoining public spaces, in order to develop a strong visual axis along streets and at intersections.	14.12.7(a) Buildings shall be designed to address the street, through alignment, façade modulation, windows, pedestrian entrances / plazas and materials that are appropriate for a contemporary university and compatible with heritage buildings and objects.	14.5.7.1(a) Buildings on sites identified as special character frontages on Aotea Precinct Plan A shall be designed to address and align to the street boundary. However, minor modulation and variance of the frontage layout, such as recessed pedestrian entrances, is acceptable to avoid architectural monotony provided that the overall continuity of the frontage is not	14.13.7(b)(ii) Building facades should align parallel with and close to street frontages and, where possible, should align with the frontages of existing neighbouring buildings.	Question as to whether the Part 5 RD assessment criteria for new building construction apply via 14.1.6 and 5.5.3? If so, the following Part 5 assessment criterion applies: 5.6.3(d)(1)(b) Buildings shall address and align to the street boundary to a height appropriate to define and enclose the street. However, minor modulation and variance of the	No	5.6.3(d)(1)(b) Buildings shall address and align to the street boundary to a height appropriate to define and enclose the street. However, minor modulation and variance of the frontage layout, such as recessed pedestrian entrances and windows, is acceptable to avoid architectural monotony provided that the overall continuity of the frontage is not compromised.

	<i>Victoria Quarter</i>	<i>Wynyard Quarter</i>	<i>Queen St Valley</i>	<i>Viaduct Harbour</i>	<i>Karangahape Rd Precinct</i>	<i>Britomart Quarter</i>	<i>Learning Quarter</i>	<i>Aotea</i>	<i>Quay Park</i>	<i>Residential Quarters</i>	<i>Ports</i>	<i>Part 5 activities</i>
		(i)(a) Where accommodation is proposed at or near street level, it may be appropriate to set back building frontages to provide a degree of privacy and separation for residents and to accommodate private open space amenity within the site. Consideration of this street front typology is encouraged through the Integrated Development Plan process.						compromised.		frontage layout, such as recessed pedestrian entrances and windows, is acceptable to avoid architectural monotony provided that the overall continuity of the frontage is not compromised.		
Minimum ground floor height development control?	14.10.8.5(a) Ground floor space in all new buildings fronting a street, through-site link or public open space shall have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 4m for a minimum depth of 10m.	14.9.11.6(a) Ground floor space in all new buildings abutting any existing or proposed street or public open space is to be designed to provide a minimum floor to floor height of 4m with a minimum depth of 6m and a minimum average depth of 8m per building frontage.	No	No	No	14.6.7.3(d) The height from ground floor to ceiling shall be not less than 4m.	No	No	No	No	No	No

City Centre proposed frontages subject to verandah control

- Existing verandah control
- Proposed extension of verandah control



City Centre proposed glazing control

- 75% minimum glazing development control + glazing assessment criterion
- 50% minimum glazing development control + glazing assessment criterion



City Centre proposed minimum frontage heights

- 13m
- 19m
- Existing 'character' minimum frontage heights
- Port and Learning Quarter (no minimum frontage control applied)

