

CHAPTER 4

GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT

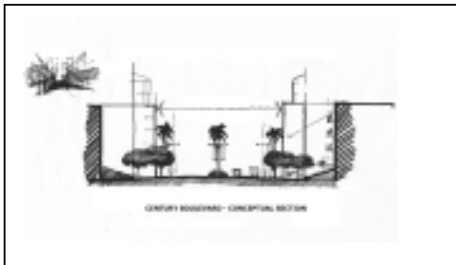
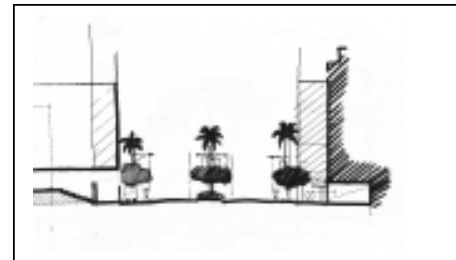
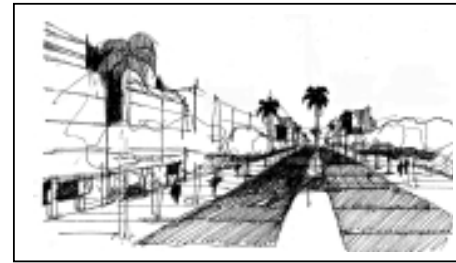
The various elements of the public environment are discussed in this section, with general design guidelines relating to each element.

Century Boulevard

Century Boulevard is the primary element for functional and visual continuity in Century City. All visitors and residents move through this urban corridor to arrive at or to leave from their various destinations.

The Boulevard has the potential to become a prestigious address, adding value to the adjacent land. But for this to occur specific design attention is required, both within the road corridor and with private developments alongside the corridor.

It is proposed to design the Boulevard as a positive urban space worthy of attracting prime buildings. Elements and features that are characteristic of an urban avenue should be incorporated. These include soft landscaping, street furniture, public transport stops and shelters, street lights, pedestrian crossings and sidewalks, street parking, traffic calming devices and appropriate signage.



An essential feature of a successful urban avenue is the way that buildings interact with the street space. All buildings should be placed on or close to the street boundary, to create an adequate street enclosure. This is illustrated in the sketches opposite and the photograph below.



In addition, the buildings should offer their front façades to the street, and acknowledge the importance of the public realm.

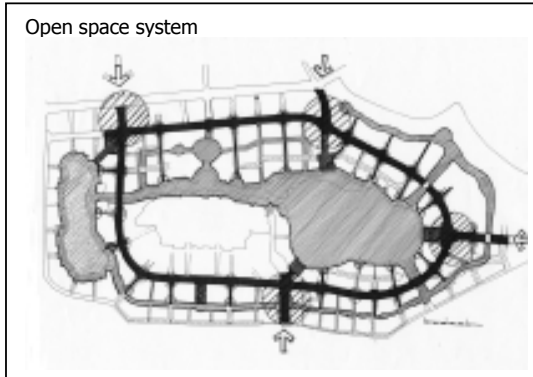
Entrance lobbies should be situated on the Boulevard and pedestrian entrances should be taken off this street. Activities on ground and first floor should be visually and functionally integrated with the street space.

The Open Space System

The open space system is a major attraction and feature of the public environment. People are naturally drawn to these spaces and move between them and the Boulevard. Water is the common element in the Century City open space system. Spaces that are related to water, have an intimate, tranquil character and should be free of vehicles. They complement the activity of the Boulevard, offering places for passive recreation. Century City contains the following open spaces:

a) Grand Canal

This public space is an important focus for pedestrian activity. Buildings facing the canal should create solid edges, with a strong relation to the public environment. Public related uses such as shops, restaurants, lobbies, windows, balconies and plazas should be placed at regular intervals to form an active edge along the canal.



b) Internal Canal Network

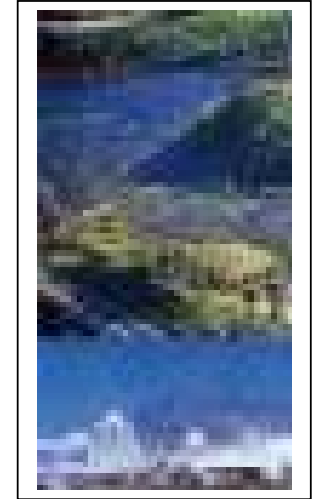
The narrower canals that cross the various precincts form a semi-private open space network, offering passive recreation and visual relief. However, the public should also be given access to these spaces with human scaled pedestrian streets terminating in local "pocket" squares at the water's edge. Canals should be treated as pedestrian streets and adjacent buildings should relate to the canals.



c) The Wetland

The wetland is the environmental heart of Century City. This is a quiet, passive space reserved for nature. Although public access is restricted, the wetland is a major public asset, visual focus and a space to be contemplated.

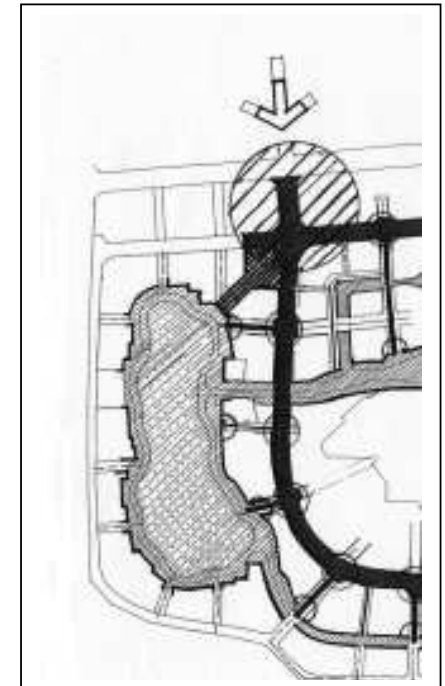
Building interfaces around the perimeter should be treated in a sensitive manner empathising with the natural setting.



d) Ratanga Leisure Island

This Urban Design Framework explores the potential for rationalisation of Ratanga Junction entertainment precinct. The concentration of the leisure park in the centre and utilisation of its perimeter for development are strategic actions that could be contemplated. The land around the edge of the park is considered of potential high value as it enjoys stunning views of Table Mountain.

Ratanga Junction has a complementary character to the wetland, offering a soft open space for active recreation.

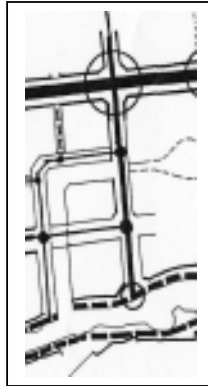


Internal Streets

Internal streets subdivide the precincts into development blocks and have the important role of providing public linkages between urban spaces and the various development parcels.

Most internal streets run perpendicular to Century Boulevard and connect the Boulevard with the open space system.

Internal streets accommodate vehicular traffic but should be pedestrian oriented and treated to encourage slow speed movement. The buildings adjoining them should form active edges and support street life at ground level.

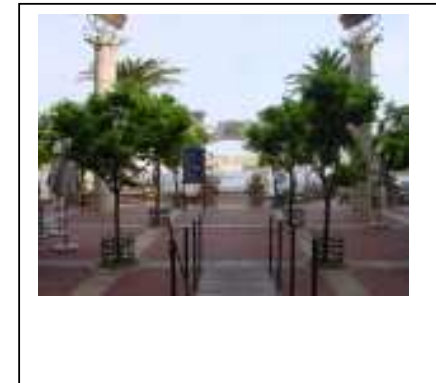
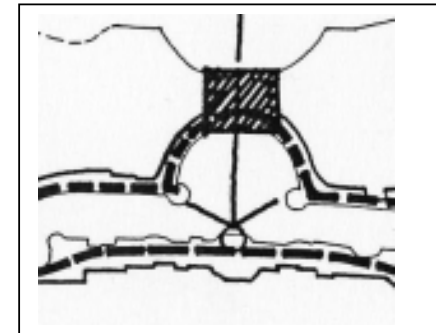
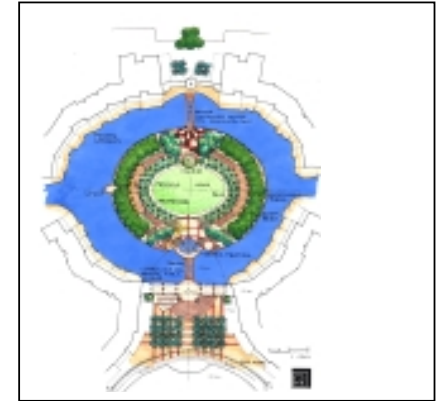


Squares and focal places

Pedestrian activity in the public environment is naturally intensified at some points (nodes) such as street intersections, entrances to precincts, entrances to buildings and transport stops.

Squares and other focal places are formed with the objective of giving spatial dimension to these activities and generally, as gathering places for the public.

Squares and focal places can also be created to perform other roles, such as to terminate streets at the water's edge, celebrate special events in the public realm, and as forecourts of institutional and religious buildings,



PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

This section provides design guidelines for buildings in terms of basic compositional elements and articulation of architectural volume. These elements provide functional and formal relationships between buildings to achieve a composite urban form within the precinct.



COMPOSITIONAL QUALITIES OF ARCHITECTURAL VOLUME

Siting: Perimeter Block Form

The sketch illustrates the basis of perimeter block form. Buildings should be placed on the street boundary within the development platform as specified in the precinct plan.

Building Types

The use of narrow building types (9 to 13 m or "two room wide") is encouraged. Simple, rectilinear forms are preferred for the definition of the building volume.

A compact building form is supported, and narrower footprints with internal spaces are preferred to large massive footprints.

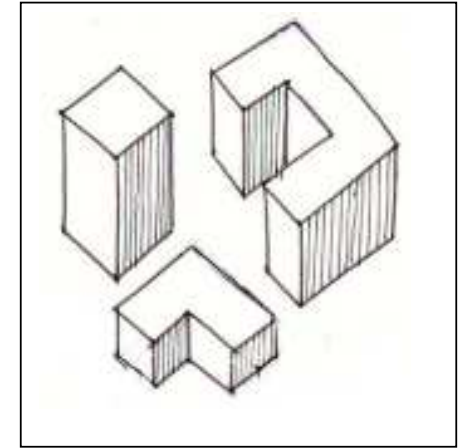


Plan Form

As a general rule, plan forms should result in a combination of rectangular shapes following the direction of the grid. Special forms however could be used as exceptions provided they are sufficiently motivated in the context of the urban design rationale.

The creation of an average building height with some elements of accentuation is an important aspect of the composite form. Building heights affect the skyline and long distance view of Century City.

An average height of between five and seven storeys is initially promoted. Taller structures could be permitted in specifically demarcated positions.



Roof Form

Individual roof forms create an overall skyline (composite form). Roofs should be based on the combination of rectilinear panels. Shapes other than rectilinear (domes for example) should be avoided in future as a general rule, because it is considered that there are enough domes at Century City. However, exceptions could be permitted in specifically demarcated places provided they are limited in size, well motivated and consistent with the urban design rationale.



Building Articulation

Large buildings should be treated as aggregates of smaller components to achieve a human scale. Therefore, monumental scale buildings should be avoided. Buildings should be articulated as described below.

a) Horizontal articulation:

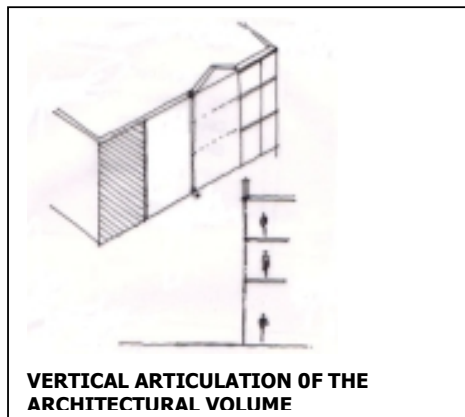
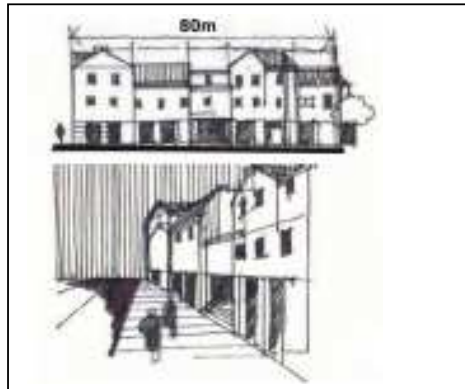
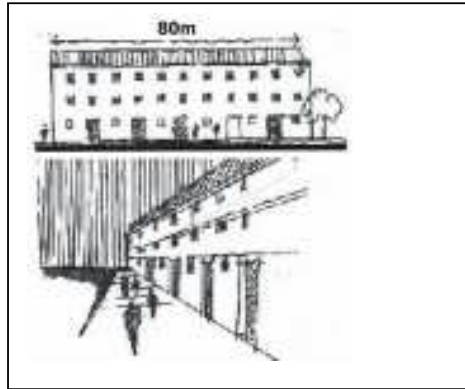
This fragments a building façade into smaller horizontal components: base, body and top. The base is lower floor(s) of the building, where an active, functional and visual interface with the public environment should be ensured. The top section is where the building meets the sky and this culmination should be expressed. The composite form of rooftops creates an important long distance view or skyline.

b) Vertical articulation:

Vertical articulation is the fragmentation of long building facades into smaller panels so that monotonous perspectives are avoided.

c) Solid / void relationship:

This describes the amount of solid building volume in relation to other major openings in the building mass (windows and doors excluded). This ratio describes how compact a building is and therefore its performance as an urban space enclosure.



Buildings facing and enclosing the Boulevard and the Grand Canal should be more compact than those enclosing softer spaces such as the wetland. This is described in more detail in the section dealing with edge responses.

d) Depth articulation

The building volume can also be articulated by means of recesses and projections.

These create shadow areas and form accentuations to the built form.

Recesses and projections can be used for horizontal and vertical articulation of the building volume. Examples of recesses and projections are: building line setbacks, entrance gateways, colonnaded sidewalks, balconies and terraces, cornices.

