

Appendix A

Urban Framework

The Newtown Cultural Precinct Urban Design Plan is the more detailed elaboration of the design principles and policies identified in the approved Newtown Urban Design Framework.

The development concept of the Newtown Cultural Precinct Plan, underpinned by overall development objectives, is focused on the Cultural Core, encompassing the area bounded by President, Goch, Carr and West Streets. It builds on the existing activities of the Market Theatre, Africa Cultural Centre and MuseumAfrica complex on Mary Fitzgerald Square, the Dance Factory, the Electric Workshop, and the South African Breweries Museum activity clusters. (GAPP sa:10)

The spatial structure of the development concept is based on an interlinked public environment, which integrates the existing key activities and forges further linkages to adjoining areas and activity clusters. Pedestrian dominant routes and lanes connect three primary public places: Mary Fitzgerald Square, Newtown Plaza and Turbine Square, forming the main elements of the public environment. A number of additional pedestrian routes radiate from the core area, forging linkages to the Johannesburg CBD and Church Street (east), to the Oriental Plaza (west), to the Craft Centre and the West City initiative (south), to the Transnet Railway Land and Braamfontein (north), and north-east to the Metro Mall. (GAPP sa:10)

Newtown West, encompassing the area bounded by Avenue, Quinn, Carr and Goch streets, is different in character and land-use to the Cultural Core and is a distinct zone with the opportunity for regeneration and upgrading, forged by to the Cultural Core.

The development emphasis the creation of a human-scaled, active, and vibrant public environment. (GAPP sa:12)

The Development Objectives aim to turn the Newtown Cultural Precinct and the Western Sector into a special place:

- * Pedestrian environments where people can walk, sit, relax and shop.
- * A series of quality public spaces, both soft and hard, of varying character to accommodate a variety of uses.
- * Revitalisation of the urban fabric and historic buildings.

- * Good local access by extending the road grid and creating streets for people.
- * A strong residential component for a variety of income groups.
- * Improvement of access by car and public transport.
- * A mixed-use environment utilising both old and new buildings.
- * A clean, safe and secure environment. (GAPP sa:14)

Land Use

Emphasis is on a mixed-use development within a cultural and art milieu, encouraging the complex integration of culture, art, entertainment, retail, commercial, office and residential activities.

The activities and uses within the buildings at ground level are critical to maintaining a sense of continuity and a vibrant, urban life. Developers are encouraged to use the ground floor, as far as possible, for retailing, entertainment, restaurants; uses that can flow out onto the sidewalks adjacent to, the building.

Above ground floor, the design of the building and the uses on the upper floors are to encourage looking out onto the public environment. Facing out of office and residential uses from upper floors, together with balconies, is encouraged. (GAPP sa:16)

Urban Space and Landscape

The urban environment of the Newtown Cultural Precinct is characterised by a public network comprising pedestrian walkways and routes, piazzas and public squares. More semi-public courtyard lanes have been identified, for the use by adjoining businesses for courtyard parking, landscaping and places of relaxation.

Proposed landscaping is structured so that it adds to the aesthetics, legibility, sense of place, linkage and physical comfort of the environment. Elements used are:

- * Formal planting of street trees along the primary routes to form boulevards.
- * A second order of tree planting to define important areas of the public environment, pedestrian routes and secondary streets.

- * The extensive utilisation of formal planters and landscape features throughout the public environment.

- * The inclusion of soft green spaces such as local parks. In addition colonnades and/or covered walkways is proposed to enhance the overall physical comfort and protection from the elements.

More private courtyards have been considered throughout the design, which should include significant landscaping and green space, contributing to the overall landscaping of the precinct. (GAPP sa:18)

Movement

“Pedestrian dominant” refers to an area where pedestrians take preference, but where limited parking and slow-moving vehicles are allowed to move through. The parts of Jeppe and Bree Streets, along Mary Fitzgerald, are designed to be part of the square, with the aim of closing these streets if required for events.

The primary vehicular movement streets (Quinn, Bree, Jeppe and West) provide access into Newtown and promote the efficient through-flow of traffic. Two Activity Streets, or “High Streets”, have been proposed, namely Carr and Bezuidenhout Streets. These are envisaged to have more intensive retail and other activities fronting onto them, with significant on street parking, wider pedestrian pavements, catering for entertainment, restaurants, daily needs and convenience shopping. The remainder of the road network forms local secondary access roads, which provide circulation throughout the Precinct, with on-street parking. (GAPP sa:16)

Built Form Directives

The developers are required to design their buildings to define space: buildings are used in grouped form to define the edges of the public environment.

Consequently, the buildings should be sited to stand on their boundary lines and collectively form a human scale to achieve a feeling of containment and natural surveillance, giving the public a sense of security. This is underpinned by active ground floor uses facing on to the public environment.

The mechanism used to promote the built form include mandatory and desirable build to lines, building zones, and the definition of colonnades or covered walkways.

Buildings and facades of historical value have been identified for conservation. Historic buildings are to be retained and recycled and facades retained and integrated with the redevelopment of the site.

Height of buildings is a critical ingredient of the spatial qualities being sought. Buildings are thus encouraged to be three to four storeys, in keeping with the existing scale of the urban environment.

The development of landmark buildings of distinct character is also promoted, as well as the architectural accentuation of buildings at important locations along the public environment. This is to promote legibility. (GAPP s.a:20)

Appendix B

Baseline

The intention of the urban design guidelines in the Newtown Cultural Precinct Urban Design Plan (GAPP Architects and Urban Designers, approved by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council in August, 1999) is to ensure the development of a cohesive urban environment that responds to its urban and topographical location and to Newtown's goals and experience. It is as framework within which architects and developers can contribute to the urban form as agreed by the JDA.

The document is intended to set the architectural and aesthetic goals recommended for the Newtown Cultural Precinct. These goals will be used for the Western Zone to ensure that the character of the precinct can be read via its movement systems, urban spaces and building forms.

A summary of the rest of the Newtown Cultural Precinct Plan is provided in Appendix A. The Design Guidelines is part of the Urban Design Plan, but is more suited as part of the Baseline.

Abstract of the Design Guidelines

The architecture must have contextual and historical significance to the Johannesburg CBD, and to Newtown. Buildings must define space rather than be objects within it. The built fabric should be defined by high floor area ratios; minimum heights that achieve an acceptable degree of enclosure of the public environment; and a clear definition of build-to-lines ensuring strong edges. Pure copying of historic styles is discouraged.

The overriding group form sought is that of a street-related wall architecture, characteristic of the Johannesburg CBD. In other words, urban spaces must be lined by a continuous façade of buildings. While heights, build-to-lines, and architectural styles may vary slightly, the net result should be a complex façade onto the public environment. Gaps between buildings are discouraged.

The interior of each block should be considered as import, a place in its own right. It should be part of the semi-private domain of the Newtown Precinct. The development of each site/erf should recognise this as an equally important frontage and respond to it accordingly.

Pedestrian entrances and circulation should be clearly emphasised from the street and the inner core of the block. Thus the building becomes a double frontage development. A hierarchy of spaces ranging from public to private is encouraged. The area must be as user-friendly and accessible to all people. Thus ramped access to buildings should be an integral part of the building's sense of arrival. Specialised facilities for mothers and children, the elderly and the disabled should be provided.

No signage may appear on the façade above the ground floor, other than the name of the building. Discreet and restrained signs are encouraged; in other words no flashing or moving signage is allowed. Signs should be of high quality, durable and colourfast materials.

Landscaping should enhance the architecture, to create a greening of the city fabric and to emphasise the relationship between built and natural elements. Landscaping must complement adjoining sites to create a unified landscape running across boundaries rather than defining them. Indigenous planting is encouraged and attention to routine maintenance must be incorporated. 20% of the site (hard and soft landscaping) must be planned and detailed by professionals.

The Newtown Cultural Precinct Design and Development Manual (GAPP Architects and Urban Designers, Nov 2003) covers the overall development intentions and other requirements that is covered, though in not so much detail, in Newtown Cultural Precinct Plan. The Design and Development Manual was developed to help interpret the Newtown Cultural Precinct Plan and is key in guiding development proposals. The manual serves as the first briefing document of any development in the Newtown Cultural Precinct.

Site Planning Directives and Guidelines

On-site vehicular circulation, including road widths, sight lines, turning radii, parking and loading bays must conform to standard required by the Local Authority.

Service entrances from the road should share access with other traffic. Where specific and frequent service is required special loading facilities must be incorporated. These should be screened so that they are not visible from surrounding roads and pedestrian systems.

Loading bays, refuse disposal, storerooms, electrical meters etc. should be treated as an integral part of the building and suitably screened from all views by walls, earth mounding and/or dense planting.

Precinct security is undertaken in the form of a City Improvement District, which will include surveillance cameras, security patrols and the provision of a control room for the development. Individual security for buildings should be situated in the reception area of each building. Access control to covered parking is an integral part of the building's design, with parking garages specifically designed with the right level of lighting.

In general, perimeter development in Newtown is encouraged, and should be achieved by a build-to line, which generally coincides with the boundary of the site. It creates enclosures for the street space and allows internal private courtyards located at the centre of the sites.

The building occupants must abide to the regulatory non-smoking practice and designated smoking areas must be provided.

Site Work Constraints

In general, the ground level of buildings should be as close to the proposed pavement or street level as possible. The aim is to provide a direct relationship between the ground floor activities and the associated street and pedestrian routes. Basements may protrude only 1,2m above pavement level.

Excavations required for basements and semi-basements should be designed in sympathy with the natural form and slope of the site. Where basements protrude above pavement level, the materials and design of these structures must be incorporated into the building design. Blank facades along streets and pedestrian routes should be avoided.

Site works required for access to individual sites, whether for vehicular or pedestrian purposes, must be designed in sympathy with the natural form and the proposed level of adjacent streets. Any ramp into a parking basement must have a level area as it enters the building before ramping down or up.

Surface water from individual buildings may not be discharged above pavement levels and must be discharged into the surface water drains provided within the streets.

Form of Exterior Elements

In all respects the mass and form of the building are to respond to existing buildings, existing contours and the proposed levels of the adjacent streets and express the dignified sense of stature of an urban environment.

The principles governing the setting-out of buildings on the site should achieve legibility, a sense of arrival for visitors, and the optimisation of views.

The emphasis in mass and form is constantly placed on elegance, be this in the spirit of the building, its lightness in the topography or the dignified solidity of a strongly composed building.

Elevations should be contemporary but take their clues from existing buildings in the Precinct. The mass and form intentions are on elegance with clearly articulated systems of proportioning, horizontal expression and vertical modulation.

Materials

High quality materials such as suitably treated glass, anodised or coated aluminium, stainless steel, epoxy coatings, and suitably treated wood are acceptable.

All surface coatings are to be long lasting, enduring in quality and appearance and requiring only low to moderate maintenance.

Wall materials may vary from load-bearing brick or high-quality masonry block or suitable stone, ceramics, granite or marble, to lightweight frames and panel systems.

All roofs, whether pitched or flat, are to be dealt with as conscience elements of façade treatment. Even flat roofs, whether behind a parapet or not, should be suitably treated with aggregate, pebble, tile or planting, particularly those viewed from the elevated freeway.

Site Landscaping Directives and Guidelines

The JDA has developed the public environment as well as the street spaces and pedestrian routes. Buildings fronting these elements must relate in mass, detail and landscape elements. Landscaping of individual sites must complement that of adjoining sites to create a unified landscape running across boundaries rather than defining them.

All planted areas must include an irrigation system to ensure that proper maintenance is guaranteed. All hard surfaces must be designed to accommodate proper storm water drainage.

Well-designed lighting of the building exterior and surroundings should be provided for security and aesthetic reasons and should complement the architecture and the landscaping.

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