

An aerial photograph of Queenstown, New Zealand, showing the town built on a peninsula and along the shores of Lake Wakatipu. The lake is a vibrant turquoise color, and the surrounding mountains are rugged and brownish-grey. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The town's buildings are visible in the foreground, and the lake extends into the distance between the mountain ranges.

Queenstown Town Centre
Public Realm Design Guidelines
14.06.2018

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LandLAB is a design-led, studio based practice creating sustainable, innovative and creative outcomes across a range of landscape, urbanism and place making projects in **Auckland, Christchurch, Queenstown, Tauranga** and **Wellington**. As our name suggests our philosophy integrates a site specific approach ('**Land**') with a creative and rigorous design process ('**LAB**'). Our work reflects our interrogation of the inter-relationships between the ecologies and systems of **landscape, urbanism and place**.

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Part A Introduction



A1 Introduction & Purpose

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Introduction

A high quality public realm for all people is the foundation of a great town. Queenstown's Town Centre public realm can more positively influence our lives – environmentally, economically and socially – far more than it does today.

Everything in the town centre – people, activity, movement and place – helps make Queenstown unique. A holistic design approach to our town's streets will enhance what's already there, extending the character, life, built form and potential inherent in our town centre. By doing this, we can create design consistency but also reveal and value difference.

The **Queenstown Town Centre Public Realm Design Guidelines (QPRDG)** is how we will guide and achieve a consistent standard for the town. It's a comprehensive tool kit to make quality public spaces and streets that are well designed, accessible and enjoyable for all.

The **QPRDG** encourages a 'complete street' approach to the public domain, and outlines how everything can work together; more generous footpath widths, enhanced management and slowing of traffic, accommodating design for cycling (and other non-motorised transport), support great building frontages and activities, provide appropriate street trees for shade, enable universal and inclusive access, quality surface finishes, exciting and welcoming lighting, and; functional and appealing street furniture.

A consistent palette of furniture and materials will help support Queenstown's heritage and character and establish places with a unique identity and meaning for both residents and visitors.

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide design guidance and direction to the proposed suite of public realm upgrades proposed as part of the Queenstown Town Centre Spatial Framework and the Queenstown Town Centre Masterplan (2017).

The intent is to establish a cohesive and consistent public realm that;

A_ Identifies and consolidates a cohesive look and feel for Queenstown's Town Centre public realm and streetscapes.

B_ Simplifies the process of design, briefing, procurement and delivery for future projects.

C_ Provides opportunities for efficiencies and economies of scale for the supply of materials and design elements.

D_ Optimises and simplifies maintenance and asset management budgets/issues

E_ Aggregates design guidance into one place

A2 What is the Public Realm?

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What is the Public Realm?

The term 'public realm' is often used to describe the spaces between buildings that are publicly accessible. Cities/towns are places where people come together, exchange, trade and enjoy sharing time and ideas with each other.

The public realm provides the stage for these exchanges and the everyday activities of a town.

Key aspects that influence the attractiveness of the public realm are:

- The people who use it and the activities that take place in the public realm
- How people move through it or pause within it
- The historical, cultural and natural landscape context
- The elements within the space and the way it is designed
- The buildings that shape it

People use and experience the public realm in different ways and at different speeds. Activities such as commuting, recreating, socialising, exercising, trading, walking, pausing, cycling, watching other people, and travelling by car or public transport all take place in the public realm.

The most intimate experiences of the public realm are generally from the perspective of pedestrians. It is from this perspective that the success of the public realm is most often judged. When each space is thoughtfully designed with respect to the human experience and the immediate physical and cultural context, it becomes a place. The best places entice people to use them, invite them to stay and beckon them to return.

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The value of the Public Realm

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The value of the Public Realm

The public realm has a significant influence on how we use and perceive a city/town. A common feature of the great cities/towns of the world is that they have a high-quality public realm. The value of the public realm relates to its ability to raise the quality of life in urban centres and contribute to happier, healthier and more productive communities. There is a growing body of research focused on identifying and measuring the benefits of high-quality public realm. These benefits include the following;

001_ Increased economic value and activity

- Well-designed cities are better placed to attract the companies, employees, services, customers and investment required for a competitive economy.
- High-quality public realm increases property values.
- An engaging public realm increases foot traffic in retail areas.

002_ Urban Amenity

- A well-designed public realm network creates ease of movement, improved accessibility and comfort. These qualities, in turn, increase safety and productivity and reduce the economic cost of congestion.

003_ Social cohesion and sense of community

- The public realm provides places and opportunities for social interaction for all age groups and social backgrounds. Social cohesion makes communities more productive and resilient.

004_ Health and well being

- A well-designed public realm helps us enjoy healthier lifestyles by providing opportunities for physical activity.
- Public spaces provide opportunities to contributing to people's mental well being.

005_ Environmental resilience

- The way the public realm is designed can significantly contribute to better air and water quality, more effective stormwater management, reduced carbon emissions, increased biodiversity and adaptation to climate change.
- A public realm that is well integrated with local landscapes and ecological systems preserves future access to natural resources.

006_ Identity and image of a city/town

- The public realm is a powerful tool to shape image, perception and cultural awareness. Cities/towns with a strong sense of place create community pride and a sense of belonging. They also attract more visitors and are sought-after locations for living and doing business.

007_ Safety

- A high-quality public realm attracts more people and activity, by day and by night, which in turn positively contributes to the perception of safety and reduced crime.
- A well-designed public realm creates a more accessible and welcoming city for all

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How to use these Design Guidelines

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How to use these Design Guidelines

Queenstown has a rich collection of heritage buildings, architecture, shop fronts, displays, public artwork and more importantly people. In addition, there is a variety of daily activities which brings the town to life, but when all of these elements are combined together they can make the town seem chaotic.

Some may consider the range of different furniture and material types used within the Queenstown Town Centre as contributing to the uniqueness of the town, however too much variety can impact the quality of the public realm. Variety can compromise the aesthetics of a town resulting in ad-hoc maintenance and restoration practices.

It is anticipated that the guidelines will form the starting point of a design brief for any future public realm project. Departures or changes from the base case provided by these guidelines should be evaluated on a merits basis.

These public realm design guidelines have been organised into 3 sections;

Part A_ Design Parameters identifies the key design parameters that inform the spatial arrangement of the public realm

Part B_ Design Application identifies the key design elements and features of the public realm and how they are located and positioned

Part C_ Kit of Parts identifies the various surface finishes, design elements and design features that establish the sense of place and identity for each component of the public realm

The **QPRDG** provides guidance on a limited palette of public realm materials and furniture elements, which supports the town's heritage and character.

The guidance helps people to understand the town, how it works, the culture that is

created through the elements in it, giving the town character and a unique sense of location.

When these palettes are applied consistently the elements act as a restrained and cohesive background allowing the genuine and distinctive features of the town and its people, to take centre stage.

The palettes emphasise the quality of the design, materials, detailing and construction techniques and cater for the needs of all users in a safe and comfortable manner that enables social interaction to flourish.

The palettes also act as a kit of parts, making it easier for people working in the public realm, such as designers, asset managers and maintenance staff, to focus their attention on applying the fundamentals of good urban design to projects.

The choice of materials and furniture reflects the anticipated demands and levels of use and will ensure long term, sustainable solutions can be implemented.

A consistent palette of furniture and materials will help support Queenstown's heritage and character, giving places a unique identity and meaning for people.

The furniture and material choices will also support the efficient management and maintenance of elements, providing economies of scale, and making the supply and replacement of materials and parts for elements less costly.

A5 Other Town Centre Design Guidance

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Other Town Centre Design Guidance

Queenstown's Town Centre has a distinctive urban character which is formed through interrelationships of complex qualities: the scale and form of many of the buildings, the pattern and rhythm of the buildings in the streetscape, the layout of the streets and pedestrian linkages, the relationship with the lake and the mountains, and the comfort of the town centre as a "people" place for workers, residents, visitors, diners, and shoppers.

In order for the Town Centre to retain and enhance this character, future changes to both the built form and public realm of the town centre must recognise and reinforce these qualities.

Development within the Town Centre is guided by the Queenstown Town Centre section of the Queenstown Lakes District Council's District Plan. This identifies the location, type and quantum of development across the town centre.

Additional architectural Design Guidance is provided by the Queenstown Town Centre Character Guide (2007).

These provide insight into the context and attributes of the built fabric of the town centre, and guidance to ensure that new development will positively contribute to the area.

The Guidelines do not seek to encourage new development that replicates the old, but rather promotes the integration of new and old so that the overall pattern of development and perception of the town centre retains its character and is perceived as a holistic experience.