

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXPLANATORY NOTE

Oamaru is recognised as New Zealand’s capital of Victorian Architecture. The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to assist owners and developers of buildings in the Business 1 and Business H zones of Central Oamaru who want to renovate, alter or redevelop their properties.

The aim is to guide building development so that it will be compatible with its neighbourhood buildings and the historic character and feel of Oamaru, and to meet the objectives of Council.

The guidelines apply both to the renovation or restoration of existing buildings and to the construction of new ones within these zones.

It should be noted that the guidelines refer not only to building facade treatments, but also to all other building elements visible from the street such as side-walls and roofs. All of these visible elements are important to the overall streetscape appearance of a building and should be addressed in an appropriate and sympathetic manner.

Refer to Section 2 Heritage Values and Sections 14.1, 14.3.1 of Part 2.

‘Issues, Objectives and Policies’ of the District Plan and also to Sections 7.1.1., 7.1.8, 11.1 of Part 3, ‘Rules’ of the District Plan.

Also refer to Appendix B – ‘Heritage Items’ of the District Plan.

1.2 WHY A DESIGN GUIDE?

Oamaru is extremely rich in natural, archaeological and European architectural heritage.

The town is especially fortunate to have its vast array of elaborate Victorian and Edwardian buildings concentrated along the Thames, Tyne and Harbour Street areas.

These historic buildings help create a sense of place and belonging and a connection to the past, which most of the people of Oamaru wish to retain.

They create a special character that is attractive to both visitors and locals, who are increasingly interested to rediscover and embrace the past.

These qualities and features are what makes Oamaru unique.



Thames Street

The Waitaki District Council has long recognised these desirable features about Central Oamaru.

During the past few years the Council has commissioned a number of studies to assess the heritage values of the area and formulate strategies for its redevelopment, revitalisation, promotion and marketing for tourist and commercial purposes.

Many of these studies have highlighted a need for some form of coherence of design ideas in the renovation of existing heritage buildings and the construction of new ones, so that all development is sensitive and enhances the existing visual, streetscape and townscape qualities of the town.

1.3 HOW THE DESIGN GUIDELINES OPERATE

The design guidelines operate on three levels:

- They identify and describe the main features and characteristics of Central Oamaru buildings, thereby promoting empathy towards the town's design heritage.
- They are a useful guide and reference to building developers and designers in preparing sympathetic designs for new buildings or alterations or renovation of existing ones.
- The Waitaki District Council will use the Design Guidelines as a measure to review how well the design of development proposals fits the objectives, policies and rules of the Waitaki District Plan.

The Design Guidelines promote awareness of buildings, the town's history and



Thames Street between Coquet and Wear Streets. c1918

Photo courtesy of the North Otago Museum Collection

tradition and its social development. They promote ideas and concepts for those involved in the renovation of existing buildings, design of new buildings and maintenance and upgrading of public spaces.

This Design Guide recognises the components which go together to make up Oamaru's unique character and seeks to promote the elements and features of the area in the form of sympathetic development.

The Guide does not promote a prescriptive approach to design. It does not, for example, rigidly specify requirements for materials, colours, fenestration or decoration. Instead, it illustrates and describes examples of acceptable and unacceptable facade treatments and places into context essential features and qualities of the Oamaru streetscape. Through these examples the document provides guidelines to designers and developers in achieving Council's objectives of maintaining and enhancing the

Victorian and Edwardian heritage of the buildings.

It is acknowledged that replication and direct imitation of the past is not necessarily appropriate, however by recognising similarity of bulk, height, fenestration elements and rhythm of building decoration, designers can use their skills and imagination to create harmonious modern buildings appropriate to today's technology.

Council appreciates and recognises the worth of good design and many of Oamaru's buildings in the past have been designed and constructed with this in mind.

Good design will acknowledge context with identified facades in the area, rhythms they establish through modulation, their windows and verandahs and in their materials, etc. However, where appropriate, Council will also be flexible so that the building is able to make its own contribution to the streetscape.

Through these methods, today's new buildings will reflect qualities appropriate to their time while still sitting comfortably with the past styles of their neighbours.

1.4 AREA COVERED BY DESIGN GUIDELINES

Refer to Map 1 of the Central Oamaru area.

The Design Guide covers the Business 1 and Business H zones of the Waitaki District Plan.

The Business 1 Zone represents the inner commercial area of Oamaru town and includes all those properties fronting Thames Street from Dee Street south to opposite Meek Street and the north side of Itchen Street west of Thames Street.

The Business H Zone includes the land on both sides of Thames Street from Meek

Street south and the land bounded by Itchen Street east, lower Tees Street, the historic area of Tyne Street and Harbour Street east to the sea.

Refer to Part III Section 11 of the District Plan for rules pertaining to Heritage areas.



North Otago Museum, Thames Street



2.0 PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES FOR NEW OR ALTERED BUILDINGS

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CONTENTS)

- New buildings should be designed to ‘fit’ the context of their neighbours with regard to scale, bulk, location, materials and modulation.
- Facades should be in keeping with their immediate surroundings in terms of height, scale, rhythm of elements and window placements and should have depth and visual interest to enhance the play of light and shade on building detail.
- Because of the overwhelming use of the local stone, wherever possible, any new buildings should be designed incorporating a cladding of Oamaru stone.
- Windows should be vertically oriented and grouped together in twos or threes to create rhythm along the facade.
- New building facades should incorporate the sympathetic use of ornament so that they are in context with their neighbours, however this may take a modern form.
- Designers of new buildings should endeavour to incorporate skyline features such as parapets, cornices, classical gable elements, column caps, flagpoles etc into their designs, to create visual interest on the skyline.
- Verandahs are an essential building element within the shopping precinct. They shall provide sufficient protection from the sun, wind and rain and should be of a similar style, height and width to their neighbours.

- **Attractively designed shopfronts significantly add to the financial success of the business. A special feature should be made of shop entrances through recessing or positioning.**
- **Corner buildings should possess a presence, by properly addressing the corner and intersection and be at least as tall as, or slightly taller than their neighbours.**
- **Colour schemes should be sympathetic to the style of the building and its neighbours. The schemes should use a base colour for the body of the building, with joinery and decoration highlighted by two or three contrasting colours.**
- **Signage should clearly identify the business, show its street number and the products and services it sells. The style of the sign, its lettering type and colour, should compliment the building style.**
- **Extensions or alterations to identified buildings should be designed so that they relate to and enhance the original facade. Materials should match those originally used as closely as possible.**
- **All identified historic buildings and facades should be retained and restored to maintain the unique character of Central Oamaru.**
- **For Design Guidelines and Visual Characteristics ‘objectives’ refer to section 6.1, page 22.**



Forrester Gallery

3.0 DISTRICT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

3.1 VOLUNTARY MEANS OF COMPLIANCE

The status of the Design Guide is a voluntary Means of Compliance and will assist owners and their professional designers and Waitaki District Council decision makers, in contributing to the special character of the town centre, whenever a change to an existing building, or the erection of a new building, is proposed.

The Guide suggests what is acceptable and appropriate and what is not appropriate.

Obligatory criteria for this zone are contained within the District Plan Part III Rules, Section 11 (Heritage Rules) which should be referred to by all owners and designers wishing to renovate or develop within these zones.

3.2 PROCEDURES

Developers and designers, should at the concept design stage, refer to this guide. Council staff would appreciate discussion at this early stage as mutual benefit can result through the exchange of ideas, an understanding of the objectives of both parties, and an appreciation of the need for the integration of streetscape features. Copies of all RMA applications affecting heritage buildings, including unlisted historic buildings and houses over 100 years old will be referred to the Historic Places Trust, North Otago Branch Committee, for comment.

On formal application for a Resource Consent, the development will be considered by Council in terms of the District Plan requirements and the Design Guideline parameters prior to recommendation and/or approval.



4.0 CONTEXTUALISM

Contextual design (contextualism), simply means design that is in character with its context. In the case of Central Oamaru, ‘context’ means the neighbouring buildings and facades as identified in the list in Appendix A.

The wider context of Central Oamaru is a thriving town consisting of established commercial, residential and industrial areas, with the commercial centre established on flat land encircled by hills to the west and south, with the railhead, port and sea to the east.

The Business 1 and Business H zones contain a very high concentration of uniquely elaborate and grandiose Oamaru stone buildings which, though generally of two storeys, appear much larger owing to their classical design and proportions.



Opera House, Community House and Abacus House,
Thames Street



The computer shop building is completely out of context with its neighbour

The buildings of the main shopping precinct on both sides of Thames Street from Dee Street south to Steward Street are generally built from boundary to boundary, of uniform two storeys and up to the street frontage, presenting a unified face to the streetscape. These buildings are further visually characterised by verandahs and display windows adjacent to the street frontage.

However, the numerous banks and public buildings on both sides of Thames Street south of Severn Street were generally built as edifices to their codes, are very grandiose and set back from the street frontages and side boundaries. This phenomenon accentuates their individuality and importance to the town.

If the character of the area is to be preserved, the existing identified facades must be retained and new facades be of appropriate design. Appropriate designs are those that

fit comfortably alongside the identified facades of the Business 1 and Business H zones.

Individual buildings of Oamaru's historic areas cannot be considered to exist by themselves. They all draw from and contribute to the context in which they stand. Each individual facade or building is part of the total streetscape environment in which it stands and must be respected if it is to succeed in giving unity to the 'whole'.

This concept is of particular importance when a new or highly altered existing building is proposed adjacent to, or close by, buildings of historic significance.

The key elements of architectural form such as scale, bulk, proportions, vertical and horizontal elements, materials, verandahs, textures and colours must be respected if a building is to succeed 'in context'.

These identified elements of architectural form which are critical to good contextual design are the subject of these guidelines.

Contextualism is more than simply duplicating existing forms from historic facades within the area. It is the blending of carefully selected architectural form in a modern and innovative way to enhance the visual integrity of the area.

The selected elements of context should be regarded as a means rather than an end, with innovation and design excellence to be encouraged.

Council recommends that building owners and developers contemplating renovation or redevelopment of their properties, contact an architect or professional designer to obtain design services or colour schemes.

Preliminary discussion at the concept stage, with the Waitaki District Council Planning and Environment Services staff is also recommended.

New buildings and additions should draw from and refer to the adjacent facades in an attempt to enhance the unique charm and character which the Waitaki District Council believes can best be sustained through the ‘contextual’ approach to design and architecture.



Looking north up Tyne Street



5.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL OAMARU

Historic Information referenced from: WHITESTONE OAMARU, Peter Shaw, 1995 Proposed District Plan, Waitaki District Council, 1996.

The original settlers to the Oamaru area were probably Waitaha, followed by Ngai Tahu, who came from the east coast of the North Island around the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Owing to the moa having become extinct around AD 1500 and the climate being unsuitable for growing kumara, most settlement was probably only semi-permanent and based around hunting and fishing.

The first European settlers to the district were whalers and sealers, with the original whaling station being set up at Moeraki in 1836.

Edward Shortland was the first European to describe the locating of what is now Oamaru in his writings of 1844.

On June 12th 1848, North Otago passed from Maori into European ownership when the Government Agent, Taly Kemp, purchased a huge block of land from the Maori. The land extended from Kaiapoi south to the Otago block and was purchased for the cash payment sum of £2000. This included the land now occupied by the town of Oamaru.

In 1851, rural land became available for purchase and settlement, either as lots of not more than 640 acres, or as much larger pastoral runs that were available on a Licence-to-Occupy basis. In 1852, new regulations halved the price per acre, encouraging extensive pastoral settlement between 1853 and 1856.

Many of the early settlers to the area would have been classed as ‘gentle folk’ as they had a University education, or were the children of the clergy. The numerous limestone caves were frequently used as initial shelter by these settlers and early dwellings often made of sod construction. Gradually the attributes of the local stone were recognised and it came into use as a building material.

Oamaru was ideally located to service surrounding farms and run holdings with the headland offering shelter for marine transport. In 1860, it overtook Moeraki as the preferred landing place of steamships. The 1860’s also saw the population grow with the discovery of gold in the Lindis and the opening up of large blocks of rural land for settlement. The population of Oamaru grew from 207 in 1861 to 730 by 1864.

Oamaru’s first store opened in 1858 and the town began developing from Wansbeck Street which was the main entry from the south. By 1863, there were grocers, drapers, an ironmonger, tailor and clothier operating. 1863 also saw the first commercial building built using Oamaru stone. This was the Shrimski and Moss Drapers building. It was described as ‘The first building in the town with any pretension to architectural style’. In 1864, the old Post Office designed by William Clayton, was constructed and is Oamaru's oldest surviving commercial building. The population of the rural areas close to the town grew and continued to prosper in the 1870’s, with the production of wheat and oats in addition to livestock.

Some of the first Oamaru stone used for building was cut from a large natural stone pillar south of Awamoa Creek. The masons originally used chisels and mallets to cut the stone, but as demand increased, saws began to be used. Its convenience and cheapness made it preferable to other building materials imported to the district. Since 1866, it has been freighted to other parts of the country, especially Dunedin and also to Melbourne. The first masons were used to working in the harder stones of the British Isles and did not understand the need to lay the stone on its natural bed, hence many of

the earliest buildings were built using incorrectly laid stone, leading to their premature deterioration.

With the advent of organised commerce to service the growing population and rapidly expanding primary production with pastoral farming, cropping and Oamaru building stone, a good cashflow was developing within the district.

This rapid influx of capital led to a remarkable building boom within the town between 1870 and 1885, when many substantial and notable stone buildings were erected.

The building boom attracted many of New Zealand's leading architects of the day.

These included William Clayton, later to become Colonial Architect, William Armson of Dunedin, William Mason and Nathaniel Wales of Dunedin, Robert Lawson of Dunedin and Thomas Forrester and John Lemon of Oamaru.

The most prominent and prolific architectural practices working in the town were those



Lower Thames Street c 1900

Photograph courtesy of North Otago Museum Collection

of Robert Lawson who designed such notable buildings as the Bank of Otago 1871 (later the National Bank), Bank of New South Wales 1884 and the Star and Garter Hotel 1867, and the practice of Thomas Forrester and John Lemon.

1872 saw the formation of the architectural partnership of Forrester and Lemon who were to design a large proportion of Oamaru's public and commercial buildings during the next eighteen years. Thomas Forrester (1838-1907) trained in Scotland as a plasterer. He also attended the Glasgow School of Art. He initially worked in Dunedin as a plasterer with his father, then later with Mason and Clayton. In 1869, Forrester was employed by Robert Lawson who sent him to Oamaru to supervise the construction of the Bank of Otago (now National Bank). Forrester settled in the town after the completion of the Bank and was employed by the Oamaru Harbour Board.

John Lemon (1828-1890) came to Oamaru in 1855 after some time at the Victorian Gold Rush in Australia. He set up a timberyard in the town and remained in business prior to joining the partnership. Lemon was not a trained architect. He brought business contacts and administrative skills to the partnership. He met with clients and supervised the construction of projects, while Forrester performed the design work.

Forrester's designs would have been influenced by the Greek revival, neo-classical and ornate renaissance styles of Scotland. These styles were considered ideal as an expression of wealth and status and therefore entirely appropriate for the rapidly expanding town.

The practice grew rapidly on the back of the then current building boom, due to the prosperity of clients with most of the buildings being substantial structures built of the local stone.

Forrester's son, John Megget Forrester, joined the practice in 1884. He continued to

practice on his own after the death of Lemon in 1890. The apparent building boom eased between 1885 and 1890, with the partnership being responsible for only nine buildings during this period, compared with more than 40 in the previous nine years.

Although a majority of the town's notable and significant early buildings were designed by Forrester and Lemon, Robert Lawson from Dunedin was influential in the architectural style of the town as previously described. Lawson's buildings appear to have provided models for some of Forrester and Lemon's later buildings.

Although there have been several notable and well designed buildings built in the succeeding 95 years since the finish of the Victorian era, including J M Forrester's Oamaru Town Hall of 1906, F.W. Petre's Catholic Basilica 1894 to 1918 and the old Oamaru Borough Council Building in Eden Street, the town's glory period certainly remains between 1864 and 1890.

The New Zealand Historic Places Trust became involved with the classification of Oamaru's historic buildings in the late 1970's. In 1987, a New Zealand Tourist and



Lower Thames Street c 1900

Photograph courtesy North Otago Museum Collection

Publicity Department grant enabled a feasibility study to assess the long term preservation and re-use of buildings and in 1988 the *Whitestone Civic Trust* was founded with the express purpose of promoting, encouraging and managing the restoration and refurbishment of the town's Victorian heritage.

In 1989, it was recommended that the Harbour/Tyne Street area become an Historic Precinct, in the theme of a Victorian town at work. At that stage a long term plan was inaugurated to see the whole area restored and occupied by working, period type businesses. That work continues today.

The building should face towards the corner or intersection and possibly possess reasonable symmetry between the two elevations.

Corner buildings should be at least as tall or slightly taller than their neighbours.

Good local examples of buildings which address the corner well include the Criterion Hotel on the corner of Tyne and Harbour Streets, the Northern Hotel on the corner of Tyne and Wansbeck Streets and the old AMP building on the corner of Tees and Itchen Streets.



Forrester Gallery



**The former Customs House presents good symmetry between the two elevations.
The reinstated parapet balustrade completes the original design.**

6.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES AND VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

6.1 OBJECTIVES

The key design objectives within the heritage precincts are:

- a) **To preserve and conserve the facades and all other building elements visible from the street on all buildings listed as class A and B in Appendix A of this report.**
- b) **To ensure any alterations undertaken on these listed buildings maintain or enhance the architectural integrity of the building.**
- c) **To ensure any alterations made to unlisted buildings respect adjacent listed buildings and maintain the visual characteristics of the area.**
- d) **To ensure that new buildings are designed in context with the nearby listed buildings to enhance the visual integrity of heritage areas and precincts.**



Plunket Rooms, Severn Street

6.2 VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

6.2.1 STREETSCAPE/CONTEXT

Streetscape character is the cumulative effect of all individual elements within the street or precinct, which when combined, give an area its special quality.

Context is the way in which individual buildings blend together with their neighbours through careful combinations of scale, bulk and proportions, to enhance the overall visual integrity of the precinct.

This character is best illustrated in the Tyne Street area, where the combination of similar building materials, colour, style, facade detailing, signs and street furniture all blend together to form the special character so much admired by both locals and tourists.

While the central town zones of Oamaru contain a variety of building ages, architectural styles and heights, there is a predominance of two-storied buildings of the



A group of buildings in context

Victorian era. These buildings of similar age and height, adjacent to each other in small precincts, develop context. Even groups of single storied adjacent buildings form their own context.

Oamaru also has an existing predominance of continuous building facades built up to the boundary line. This visual integrity must remain and be encouraged.

New buildings should ‘fit’ the context of their neighbours, whatever their scale, bulk, location or proportions.

When preparing drawings to illustrate a proposed redevelopment, designers should show the relationship of the proposal to its neighbours, to demonstrate that it has been designed ‘in context’.



Buildings in context Lower Thames Street

6.2.2 FACADES

The historic facades of the Business 1 and Business H zones are characterised by similarity of scale, solidity and proportions.

Most of these buildings are 2 or 3 storeys and contain the classical elements of proportion including a base, middle and top sections, all well defined. The facades are characterised by the use of solid materials, mostly Oamaru stone, with the windows usually vertically oriented, forming three-dimensional holes in the wall.

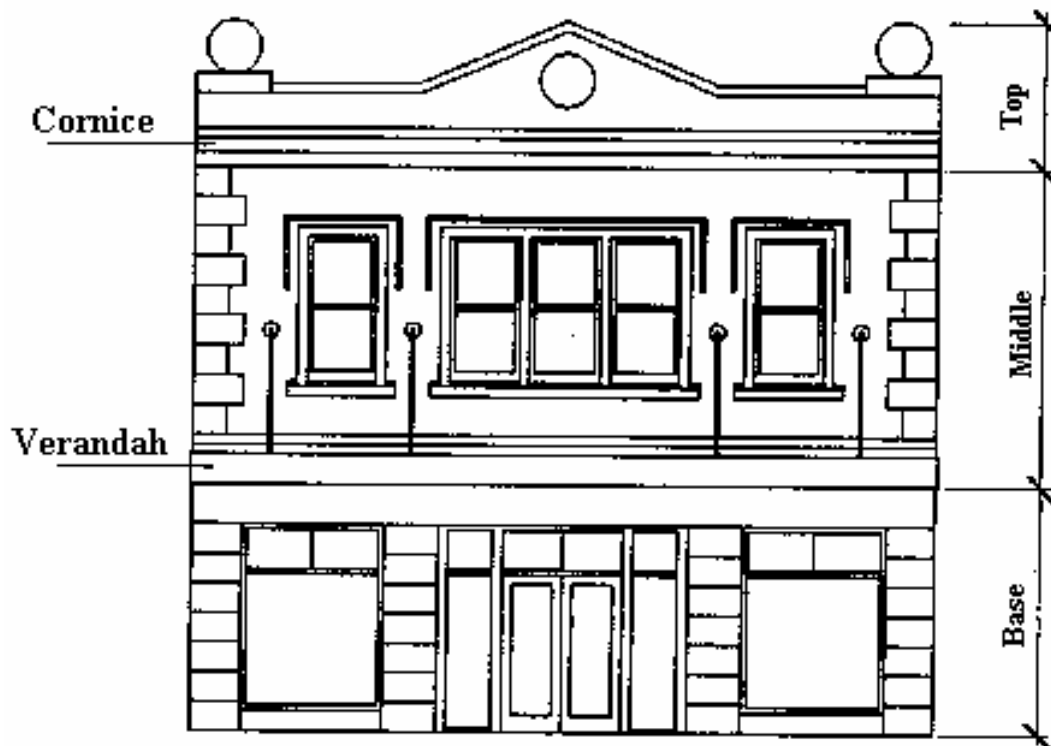
Facades should be in keeping with their immediate surroundings in terms of height, scale, rhythm of elements and window placements.

For new buildings adjacent to identified historic buildings or facades, the guideline can be further refined.

- a) Building facades have solidity, depth and should be of a similar height to and use materials in context with their historic neighbours.**
- b) Building facades should be divided into a base, a middle section with well proportioned windows and architectural detail and a top or skyline element, all well defined.**
- c) Long elevations should be divided into bays through the use of accentuated columns or other three-dimensional effects**
- d) Verandahs, where used, should be of a similar height, depth and fascia height to their neighbours. The maximum fascia**

height should be 450mm and in a style appropriate to the architecture of that building.

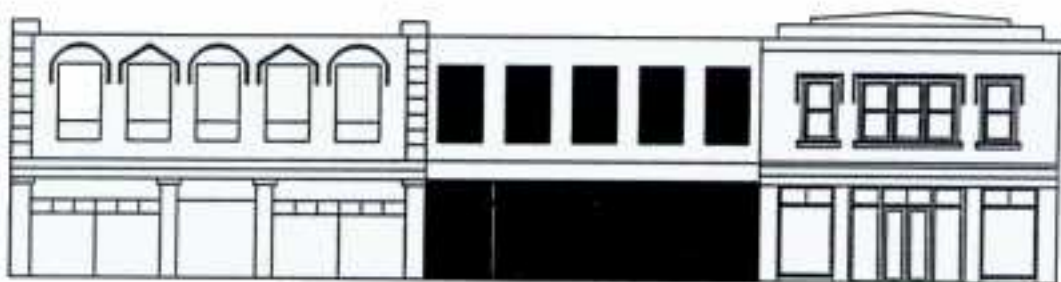
- e) The below verandah facade should present a well-proportioned shop front to the street.
- f) Bland solid walls at street level within the identified zones, should be avoided.



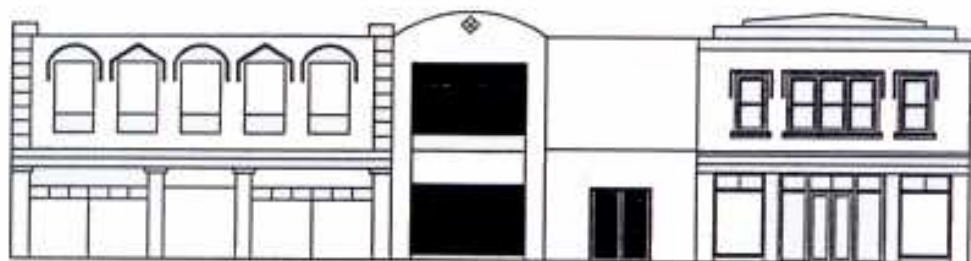
The elements of the facade should be well defined and designed with a base (shop front), middle (upper floor) and top (parapet).



↑This building relates well to its neighbours



↑This façade lacks solidity and decoration



↑Although this building is in scale, its design is out of context

6.2.3 MATERIALS

Oamaru stone is by far the predominant building material used within the identified zones, with a small proportion of plastered brickwork or unplastered brick.

Because of the overwhelming use of this local stone, any new buildings should be designed employing a cladding of Oamaru stone.

Facades should be constructed predominantly of solid construction, having sufficient detail, depth and similarity of materials to harmonise with their immediate neighbours.

Where Oamaru stone needs repair, new replacement solid stone should be installed to match the existing finish.

Large areas of tinted or clear glass or aluminium curtain walling should be avoided, as should thin sheet wall claddings such as corrugated steel, profiled aluminium sheeting and fibre cement.

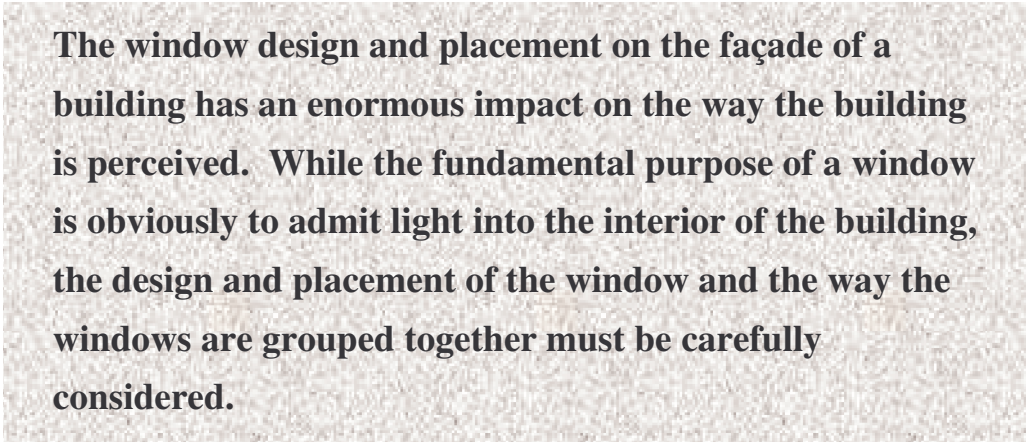


This Eden St office block shows impressive use of Oamaru stone in a non-Victorian building.

Where less traditional materials are used, they should be incorporated into the facade between traditional elements of solid vertical columns, beams or cornice detail. The visual impact of larger areas of glass can be greatly mitigated in this way.

Roof coverings were traditionally either corrugated iron or slates. New roof coverings should employ materials of similar appearance to those of traditional usage nearby.

6.2.4 WINDOWS



The window design and placement on the façade of a building has an enormous impact on the way the building is perceived. While the fundamental purpose of a window is obviously to admit light into the interior of the building, the design and placement of the window and the way the windows are grouped together must be carefully considered.

Windows of Victorian and Edwardian buildings were typically vertically oriented and of rectangular proportions- often with two approximately square sashes, which were recessed into the solid facade creating an effective shadow line.

Windows were often grouped together in twos or threes, which created a rhythm along the facade of the building. On taller buildings each change of level was often marked by a change of window shape, with the window surrounds further detailed to add interest and definition to the facade.

Windows in new buildings which are adjacent to identified facades (Appendix A), should respect the scale, proportion and rhythm of the immediate area.

Windows in any buildings should not be obscured by signs or cladding and renovations of older buildings should avoid removal or covering up of existing windows.

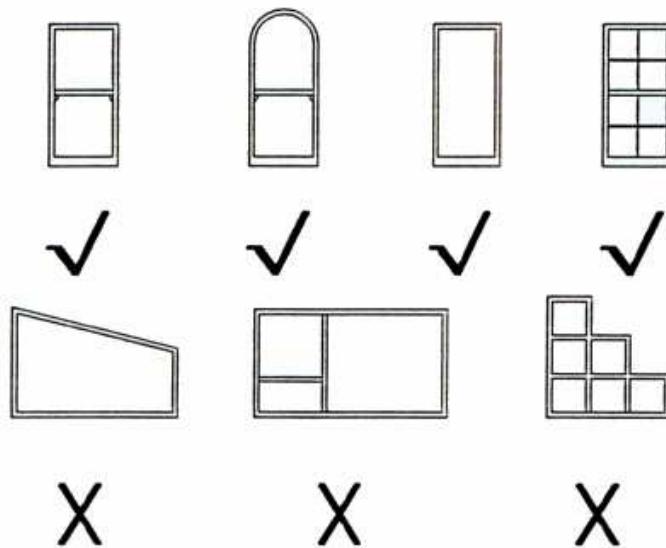
There should be no use of aluminium windows in historic building faces. Where existing, leadlight and stained glass windows should be renewed in character.



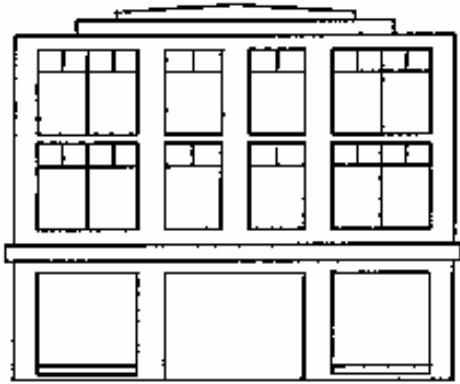
**The window placement helps create a well proportioned facade.
National Bank, Lower Thames Street**



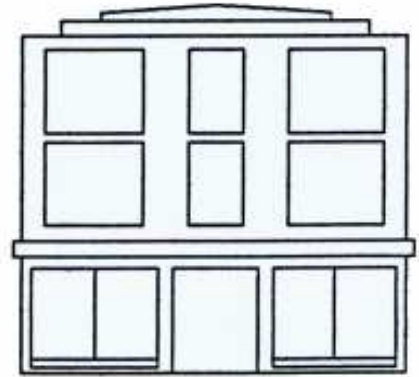
Inappropriately proportioned windows in this Victorian facade.



**Vertically aligned windows are more appropriate.
Other window shapes can be successful but
require careful design consideration.**



Appropriate window layouts and vertically aligned structural elements.



Inappropriate window modules which don't relate between base and middle sections.

6.2.5 ORNAMENT

Ornamentation is the decorative element of the façade which enhances the architectural style and creates visual pleasure to the streetscape.

In an architectural sense, ornament has been described as being any element on a building that is superfluous to its function or structure.

Before the 1930's ornament was common on commercial buildings, however with the advent of the 'Modem Movement' its use declined as building design embraced the dicta of '*less is more*' and '*form follows function*'.

Following the disastrous Napier earthquake of 1931, many Victorian and Edwardian buildings throughout the country were stripped of their parapets, cornices and other decorative features, as it was perceived that they posed a risk in the event of another major earthquake. Many Oamaru buildings, such as the Criterion Hotel, suffered this unfortunate fate.

It is desirable that new building facades incorporate the sympathetic use of ornament,



Appropriate ornament of the Victorian era.

so that they are in context with their neighbours.

Modern ornament should create visual interest and a three-dimensional effect and may include sun screens, or applied moulded concrete or plaster decoration. A limited use of ornament around windows and on parapets may be appropriate, however such ornament must be an integral part of the overall design and not just applied in an arbitrary fashion.

On all identified buildings within the Heritage Zone, existing ornament should be preserved and when restoring facades, all previously removed ornamentation such as parapets, cornices and other decorative elements should be replaced.

Original photographs or drawings such as those held by the North Otago Museum are an excellent source of reference to a building's former glory.



Example of ornament on a Tyne Street building

6.2.6 PARAPETS AND SKYLINE ELEMENTS

The capping or parapet of a building façade is a very important finishing element against the skyline.

Oamaru's historic buildings abound with ornate parapets and skyline features, and these, together with the accompanying upper cornices, were commonplace on most commercial buildings until the mid 1920's.

The styles of parapet features were as varied as the building designs themselves. Some were fully gabled in the classical Greek style, some were flat topped with panels of exposed vertical balusters in the Roman style, while others were adorned with



Tyne Street

columns, urns, corbels and a variety of curved, peaked and raised focus elements, or entablatures, often with the building's construction date and business name within.



Many of these topping features have been removed over the years for safety reasons as previously described and full consideration for their return should be given when restoring a facade. The use of stainless steel rods and

Cnr Tees and Itchen Streets

epoxy grouts enable these features to be securely fixed to the main structure.

Designers of new buildings within the Heritage Zone, should endeavour to incorporate skyline features such as parapets, cornices, classical gable elements, column caps, flagpoles, etc into their designs to create visual interest on the skyline.



Criterion Hotel after refurbishment



Examples of appropriate parapets and skyline features.

6.2.7 VERANDAHS

The verandah has always been a prominent part of the central area building streetscape and together with the supporting cast iron verandah posts is one of the essential items which give the Oamaru shopping precinct its antique character.

Verandahs are an integral part of Thames Street north of the Severn Street intersection. However, most other parts of the Business 1 and Business H zones are devoid of these adornments. Verandahs provide essential shelter, define the pedestrian shopping precinct, provide character, divide the building facade between the shop front and the body of the building and often provide a suitable fascia on which to attach advertising signs.

Oamaru is relatively unique in still having so many original cast iron verandah posts, together with their cast and wrought iron corner braces. These posts set up a visual rhythm to the street and create an arcade effect, therefore their preservation is to be



Verandah posts create an arcade effect.

encouraged.

Another unique feature of the Oamaru shops is the predominance of curved verandah forms. These features enhance the streetscape character of the town.

All verandahs and posts on existing buildings should be preserved and restored and new buildings fitted with verandahs in context with their neighbours.

Verandahs should be of a similar height, width and style to their neighbours, with fascias no deeper than 450mm. Sloping verandahs should not obscure the windows or architectural detail of a building and the design should complement the building style to which it is attached.

Appropriate and adequate under-verandah lighting should be provided.



These elegant curved verandahs help give Oamaru its unique character.

6.2.8 SHOPFRONTS

The shopfront is a vitally important element of a commercial building. Appropriate design of the shopfront can significantly add to the financial success of the retail business.

The shopfront is the dominant visual element below the verandah. Well-designed shopfronts enhance the street and encourage shoppers to linger and take interest in displays.

Traditionally, shop entrances were recessed and were either centrally located with display windows on either side, or set to one side of a more prominent display window.

A succession of these recessed entrance ways creates a rhythm along the footpath and adds to the visual experience of shopping.



**Recessed entrances allow the shopper to stop off the footpath and browse.
Lower Thames Street**

6.2.9 CORNER BUILDINGS

Traditionally in most towns, corner sites were highly sought after as landmark locations. Important buildings such as banks, hotels and government buildings were thus located.

As Oamaru grew, many of its most important buildings were built on corner sites, however not many of these buildings took advantage of the full potential such sites offer.

A corner building can have the advantage of being truly three dimensional, and may possess a significant corner element such as a tower, cupola, mitred corner, pediment capping, accentuated columns and capitols or a prominent corner entrance.

The building should face the corner or intersection and possibly possess reasonable symmetry between the two elevations.

Corner buildings should be at least as tall or slightly taller than their neighbours.



The former Northern Hotel addresses the corner in an appropriate manner.

Good local examples of buildings which address the corner well include the Criterion Hotel on the corner of Tyne and Harbour streets, the Northern Hotel on the corner of Tyne and Wansbeck streets and the old AMP building on the corner of Tees and Itchen streets.

6.2.10 COLOUR

Colour is usually an integral part of the design of early buildings, just as it is today, however, there was only a limited range of colours available.

With most substantial buildings in the town being constructed of the local off-white stone alone, colour was sometimes added to stone frieze panels or horizontal detail lines to lift the otherwise bland appearance of these structures.

The only other colour that appeared on these buildings was to the doors and window frames and sashes. As a contrast to the light stone, these elements were frequently picked out in dark greens, reds and browns.



Dark trim colours contrast well with the painted plaster and Oamaru stone.

Interesting original examples of painted highlighting on stonework appear on the old Northern Hotel in Tyne Street and the upper frieze panels on the Smiths Store building in Tyne Street.

Some original Victorian and Edwardian buildings were plastered and painted.

There is however no fixed formula for the colour of buildings.

Usually a base colour is used for the body of the building, with joinery and decoration highlighted by two or three contrasting colours.

It should be remembered that lighter colours read more strongly and darker colours recede, therefore variations in colour and tone can be used to emphasise modulation and decoration on the facade.

Often a tone on tone effect, using adjacent tones of the same general colour from the chart, can look very effective.



This building demonstrates appropriate tone on tone colour selection, however the oversized verandah fascia signs diminish the positive affect.

General principles in selecting colours for building facades include:

- Limiting the numbers of colours - usually to three, maximum four.
- Avoid large areas of bright or garish colours.
- Avoid dark monotone colour schemes that hide detail.
- Avoid stripes, murals or colour patterns that don't relate to the facade detail.
- Choose colours that are appropriate to the architectural era of the building.

i.e. Victorian type colours for Victorian buildings and Art Deco colours for these era buildings.

- Choosing an era inappropriate colour scheme can detract from the architectural merits of good buildings.
- Do not paint previously unpainted stonework, plaster or brickwork etc.
- Oamaru stone, plaster and brickwork can be cleaned by careful trickle washing and scrubbing to give the building a 'new' look. High pressure waterblasting should be avoided as irreparable damage can occur to base materials and mortar joints.
- Many paint manufacturers produce colour charts to help selection of appropriate colours for heritage buildings.
- The British Standard B52660 chart, available from most paint manufacturers, contains many appropriate heritage type colours, as does the '*Resene Heritage Colours*' chart and the '*Dulux Popular Colours*' (Traditional Colours) chart.
- Further assistance in choosing appropriate colours may be gained by

referring to:

*'Restoring a New Zealand House', Christopher Cochran, New Zealand
Historic Places Trust, 1991. Pages 61-62.*



This building demonstrates colour a scheme appropriate to its era.



This colour scheme while not unpleasant, is inappropriate to the era of the building.



The simple colour scheme uses a dark trim highlight to produce a pleasant effect.

6.2.11 SIGNAGE

Signs are an integral part of the townscape. Well designed and located signs can enhance the appearance of a building, giving it vitality and presence.

Conversely, signs which are poorly designed, hard to read and out of scale, detract from the streetscape qualities and cause visual clutter.

Refer to clauses 13.1.7 and 13.2 of Part Three '*Rules*' of the Waitaki District Plan.

The main purpose of signs within the central business zones is to clearly identify the business, its street number and the products and services it sells. The signs should include only the essential information, through words, pictures, symbols, colours or details.



This signage is appropriate to the building and its era.

Good signage provides clear information, in a letter type that is appropriate to the era of the building and is uncluttered and easy to read, e.g. Victorian era style and type faces on Victorian buildings etc.

The elements of good design are vitally important in the composition of all signs, such as scale, materials, colour, style, placement and context. Avoid duplication of information and select a clear concise type-face which is easily readable.

These elements need to be carefully co-ordinated with the building design and the type of business, to create a balanced effect.

Employ a graphic designer, architect or sign contractor to design the sign to harmonise with your business or building.

Avoid visual clutter by providing fewer, clearer signs.

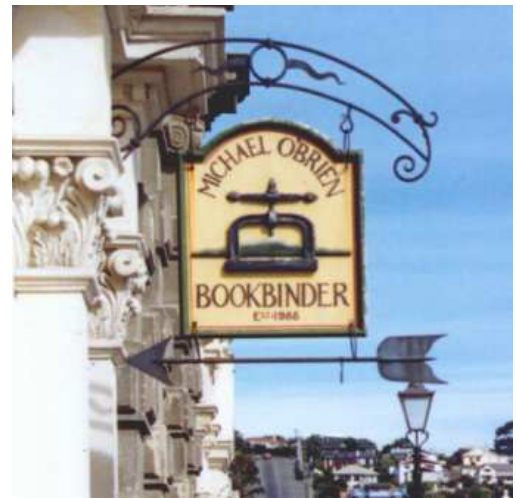
Oamaru's business zones have high heritage values. Signs within these areas must be carefully designed and located so as not to diminish the heritage character.

Therefore, signs should only be fixed to the buildings where they would originally have been located.

Signs should not be placed over architectural detailing or window panels.

For a sign to stand out, both the lettering and the background colour should be painted a contrasting colour to that of the building, with the sign defined by an outer edge line in another colour.

These well-designed and located signs enhance the heritage values of these precincts.



Sign lettering may be enhanced by the traditional methods of '*shaded faces*' which gave the appearance of the letters being raised from their background, '*highlighting*' where the shaded letters were enhanced on their surfaces in lighter colours to show the appearance of reflected light and '*cast shadows*' where unshaded letters appeared to float or stand clear of the sign surface.

The lighting of signs also needs to be carefully considered. In Historic Precincts, spot lit signs look more effective than back lit signs. Neon signs should be avoided.

When new signs are erected on a building all old or redundant signs should be removed to avoid visual clutter and to enhance the value of the new sign. The exception to this, are old historically important signs, which shall remain as an interesting link with the past.



Buildings as a sign should be avoided within these zones. The abundance and duplication of signs causes visual clutter and diminishes the primary message.



This type of signage is inappropriate in a heritage zone and is out of context with its historic neighbour.



The subtlety and sophistication of this blade sign and window signage has high impact on this historic building.

6.2.12 FACADE RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION

The restoration and conservation of historic facades is an important step towards cementing Oamaru's place as a major tourist stopover town. As part of this process, the reinstatement and replacement of decorative elements removed over the years, should be encouraged.

Oamaru is fortunate there was little commercial pressure on the town throughout the 1970's and 1980's, that led to the wholesale demolition of historic buildings in many other towns and cities throughout New Zealand.

Today, society places a greater tangible worth on historic buildings and the value they contribute to the economic wellbeing of Oamaru.

The high profile of the Whitestone Civic Trust and the local branch of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, has contributed greatly to this change in public attitude.

Over the past 10 years, several buildings and facades throughout the town have undergone varying degrees of physical conservation and restoration, from a simple repaint through to the complete trickle water cleaning or scrape cleaning of the Oamaru stone and repair and replacement of missing detail and ornament.



This uneven spalling of the stonework is probably caused by the stone being originally laid off its bed.

A major misconception with historic buildings, is that the structural strengthening required is prohibitively expensive. This is normally not the case, as a structural engineer experienced in this type of work, can usually provide a structural design system, which satisfies the Building Code requirements at reasonable cost.

Often, historic buildings by their simple and solid design, can be sufficiently strengthened by physically connecting the floor joists and roof trusses back to the outside walls, through simple bolt and bracket connections and the occasional ceiling or floor diaphragm.



Facade cleaning underway on the former Union Bank of Australia building.

Facade restoration of Oamaru stone buildings, can vary from simple stone washing involving trickle or spray water cleaning and hand scrubbing with nylon brushes, through to the complete hand scraping and sanding back of the stone surface, together with the repair and replacement of damaged and missing elements.

Plaster buildings may require the thorough and detailed repair of missing, loose, drummy (hollow backed) and damaged plasterwork and cappings and possibly the replastering of parapet backs.

Brick buildings may require a thorough wash down and repointing of perished jointing.



Restoration of the Criterion Hotel facade.

All this work is essential to waterproof the buildings and prevent further deterioration through the ingress of water.

All plaster mixes and mortars used in the repair work should not be harder than the original materials as a harder mix can cause further flaking of the original material.

All materials used for the restoration process should match those used originally, as closely as possible.

Building owners and designers should consult historical books on Oamaru and research at the North Otago Museum, for old photographs of local buildings. These photographs are a valuable source of information about the original ornamentation which buildings possessed

and although in black and white, can often give useful clues as to the original colour scheme or colour contrasts.

As previously mentioned, unpainted Oamaru stone, plaster or brickwork should be left unpainted and cleaned if necessary by a trickle water cleaning system and scrubbing. High pressure water blasting should be avoided as irreparable damage can be caused to the Oamaru stone, plaster work or mortar joints.

If necessary, the paint which has been previously applied to stone, brickwork or plaster can be removed using a chemical stripper (usually methylene chloride based) and high temperature steam. This is a specialist job and should be undertaken by professionals.

In some cases it would be desirable, where possible, to provide new facades in sympathy with the neighbouring buildings, to existing buildings which have been built out of context with their historic neighbours.



This Thames Street store recently underwent facade renovation.

6.2.13 BUILDING PRESERVATION

Oamaru is extremely fortunate to have such a rich and historic architectural heritage remaining in the 1990's, containing many fine buildings, a number of which are of national significance.



**William Clayton's original Post office of 1864
has been sympathetically converted to a restaurant and bar.**

It is however, the dense concentration of these fine buildings towards the southern end of Thames Street and the Harbour/Tyne Street areas, which creates something really special and unique about Oamaru.

Other notable features include:

- Central Oamaru is not just a Victorian town, but a pleasant and cohesive mix of varied architectural styles ranging across the Victorian, Edwardian, Arts and Crafts, International and Modern styles.



BEFORE restoration



AFTER: These restored buildings have now attracted appropriate new tenants.

- A wonderful feature is the predominance of decorative cast iron verandah posts on the buildings in the main shopping precinct.
- The variety of elegantly curved verandah canopies.
- Most buildings are generally in good overall condition, however the appearance of many would be improved with routine maintenance, including being cleaned or repainted in appropriate colours. This work would enhance the overall aesthetic and historic values of the town.
- To increase Oamaru's already solid reputation as an historic town, building owners must be encouraged not to demolish identified buildings, but to collectively restore their buildings in an authentic manner and attract suitable tenants conducting business on an historic theme.
- There are many sites available with unimportant and uninteresting buildings on them within the central Oamaru area. These are the sites which can be redeveloped with new buildings, built in context and sympathy with their historic neighbours.

During January and February 1998, a survey of all buildings within Business 1 and Business H Zones of central Oamaru was carried out. In all, approximately 184 buildings were viewed and evaluated. Each building was carefully considered as to its merits and how it contributed to the overall heritage values of the town.

The main question posed for each building was:

“Would the demolition of this building affect and be a loss to the overall heritage value of the town?”

If the answer was in the affirmative, the building was then classified on a ‘*Class A or B*’ basis, with *Class A* being the more important.

A further class of buildings was identified, these being buildings of ‘*Streetscape Significance*’.



This recycled building on Lower Thames St provides a popular backdrop for unhurried conversation.

The Classification System

All identified buildings were classified in accordance with their overall 'Heritage Values' and importance to the town.

The definition for each class follows:

Class A *The complete building should be protected and every effort made to encourage restoration, refurbishment, alteration and signage, in keeping with the original style of the building. These buildings are generally Category 1 Historic Buildings in terms of the Historic Places Act*

Demolition of a Class A Building would be a Non Complying Activity.

Class B *The heritage facades of these buildings should not be demolished. Every effort should be made to encourage restoration, refurbishment, alteration and signage in keeping with the original style of the building. These buildings are often Category 2 Historic Buildings in terms of the Historic Places Act.*

Demolition of the heritage facades of a *Class B* Building would be a Discretionary Activity.

Streetscape Significance *The facades of these buildings are desirable to be retained from a streetscape point of view.*

This list of 'Streetscape Significant' buildings is to assist owners and Council staff in maintaining streetscape character, in keeping with the Heritage values of the area.

Demolition of this category of building also requires a resource consent because it is not listed as a permitted activity.

Owners of these buildings should consult the council staff.

Should demolition of any class of building be requested, Council would have to consider the effects on surrounding properties and the streetscape character of the area.



A fine restoration. The Waitaki District Council leading by example.

If conditional consent was granted, Council may consider the imposition of a substantial bond on developers to ensure that the building is replaced to its satisfaction and within a stipulated time, so that the site of the demolished building does not end up as an empty section or carpark.

Any replacement building approved by Council would be required to be of a similar bulk and character, in keeping with surrounding buildings.

Failure to comply with Council's agreed conditions would involve forfeiture of the bond.

The Heritage Buildings Record Inventory (Appendix A) lists all buildings within the identified zones, which are also classified by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Other buildings classified by the Trust may be added to this list from time to time.

Consultation with and approval of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust is required for all buildings listed by the Trust, whenever an owner wishes to undertake alterations to, or demolition of; that building.

These guidelines do not signify that Oamaru remains in a 'time warp', but that the history is retained and preserved and that all new buildings within the Business 1 and Business H Zones, are designed in sympathy with their neighbours, not at odds with them.





Reflections on the past.

APPENDIX A

DISTRICT PLAN REGISTER OF LISTED HERITAGE BUILDINGS

APPENDIX B

HERITAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES’ REGISTER OF BUILDINGS OF STREETSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE