

Strategic Theme:

6

Vibrant Streets and Open Spaces

Strategic Priorities aimed at creating public places in town where locals and visitors can relax and meet

Initiatives under this Theme include:

- Reconstructing the open space of Market Place with larger planters and encouraging a change of uses on the ground floor of the adjacent buildings to better interact with the public space.
- Reconstructing the open space of Bythell Place with planters to soften the feel and create sheltered places turned away from the passing traffic in Maxwell Road and Queen Street.
- Upgrading the streetscape in upper Scott Street to support the increasing night life oriented activities in the area through improved amenity.
- Upgrading the current lighting and furniture elements in Market Street and Market Place to create a more contemporary image and remove unnecessary clutter from the streets.



5.6.1 Urban Open Spaces

A range of public open spaces currently exists within the town centre. Apart from the areas around the river, Seymour Square and the school grounds, most of them are hard surface urban spaces. Many of those are purely functional car parking areas (some with tree planting) with little amenity value for pedestrians or others.

The distribution and amount of existing urban open spaces with high amenity value is appropriate for the size of the town centre. However, over time more urban open spaces could be developed. In this Vision, the focus is on strengthening existing urban open spaces.

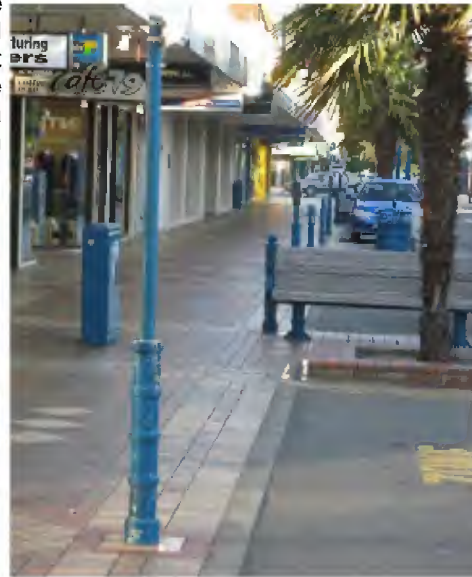
Qualities of good urban open spaces that should be pursued, include:

- A sense of enclosure
- Multiple points of access
- Amenity value
- Overlooked by surrounding active uses and passing traffic.

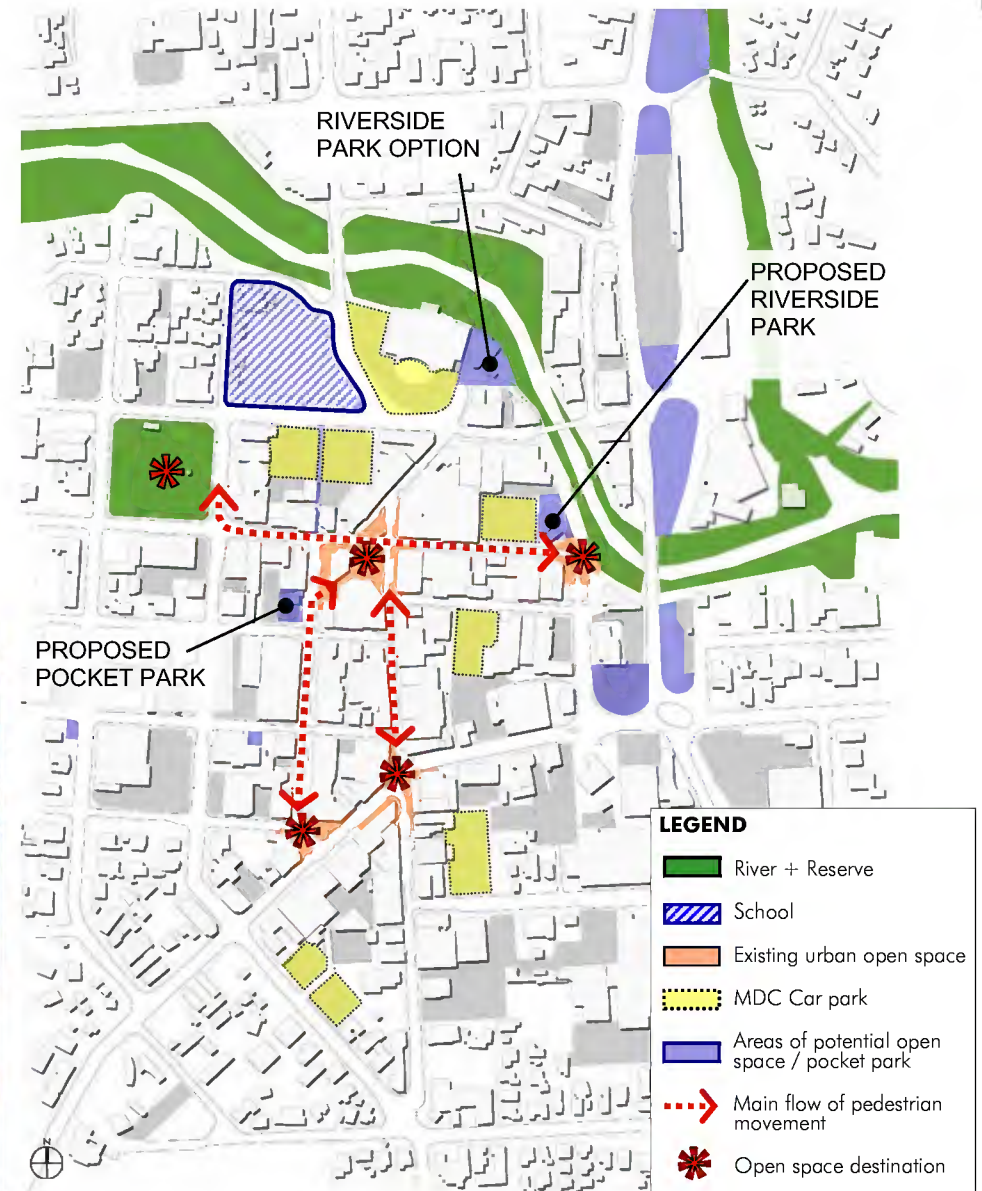
The quality of the streetscape is an important factor for the amenity of the town centre. Blenheim has not long ago invested in a streetscape upgrade of Market Street. This has certainly increased the walkability, a quality that should be extended to other areas within the town centre. However, the streetscape elements have a busyness to them and could be perceived as dated. The amount of streetscape elements associated with the implemented design concept creates a sense of clutter and negatively impacts on the walkability and accessibility.



ABOVE FIG. 5-63: Market Place



ABOVE FIG. 5-64: The streetscape of Market Street



ABOVE FIG. 5-65: Public open spaces in the town centre: Current - Potential - Proposed

5.6.2 Changes to Market Place

The open space of Market Place could be reconstructed to improve the sense of enclosure and increase the usability for events. The current raised planters work well as places to sit on. This should be added to. The preferred option has two large raised planters in the southern part of Market Place and one in the northern part. All three planters will have gradually undulating lawns for people to lay or sit on. The resilience of the grass should be an important consideration for detailed design.

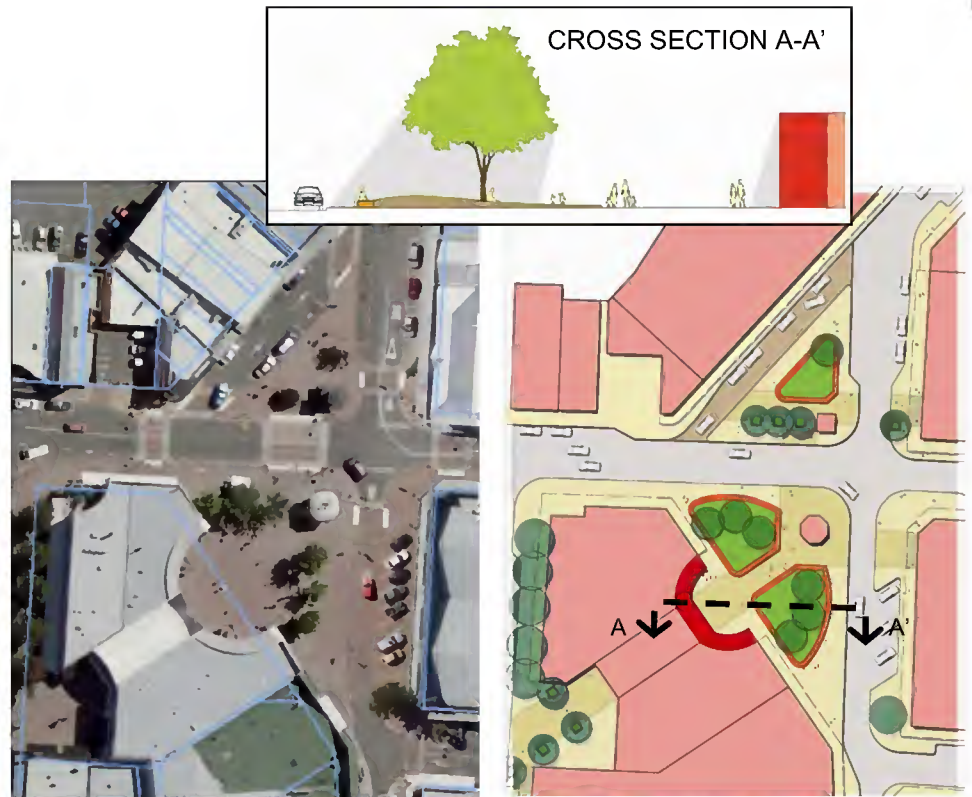
All existing trees will be retained and new trees will be planted in the northern part. Other elements such as the rotunda and the clock tower could be retained. A change of texture is required for the part of Market Street that cuts through Market Place to signify that the pedestrian has dominance over cars.

Uses that engage more actively with the open space should be attracted to the ground floor of the Forum building. Changes to the building might be desirable for this purpose.

This proposed upgrade ties in with an increased local awareness of the historic significance of Market Place. Anecdotally, Blenheim is the only town in New Zealand where the term Market Place has survived. The name originated when Market Place was the hub of the town, where regional farmers brought produce to sell. The New Zealand Historic Places Trust has agreed to fund four signs to be put up around the area.



ABOVE FIG. 5-66: Artist's impression of Market Place after the proposed reconstruction (includes alterations to the Forum building)



ABOVE FIG. 5-67: current situation of Market Place

ABOVE FIG. 5-68: conceptual plan and cross section for the reconstruction of Market Place



ABOVE FIG. 5-69: the current situation of Market Place



ABOVE FIG. 5-70: sketches of three other options for reconstruction of Market Place

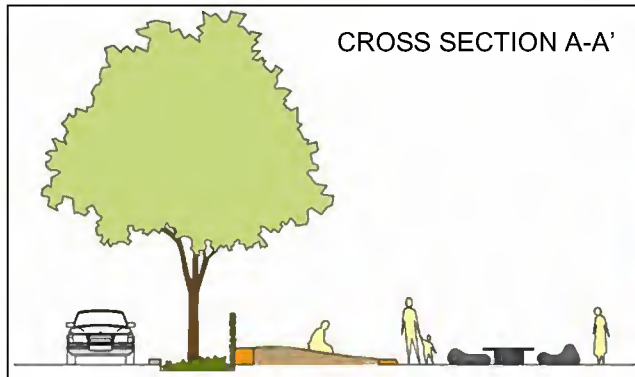
5.6.3 Changes to Bythell Place

The open space of Bythell Place could be reconstructed with planters and trees on the street edges. This will assist with the definition of the open space. Two additional raised planters on the street edges will be used to further soften the feel and create sheltered places turned away from the passing traffic in Maxwell Road and Queen Street. These planters will be grassed and mildly sloping to allow people to sit on them.

More unobstructed and better useable open space will be created by removing the existing planters. This will help with the conflicting situation between passers-by and people using the street as spill over space for the associated pubs.

Many of the existing bollards on the street edges could be removed as the planters mark the boundary between space for pedestrians and space for cars and also stop cars from driving on to the footpath. This will lead to a less cluttered streetscape.

A total of five indented parking bays will have to be removed for this reconstruction.



ABOVE FIG. 5-71: Cross section of the proposed raised planters.



ABOVE FIG. 5-72: Existing situation Bythell Place.

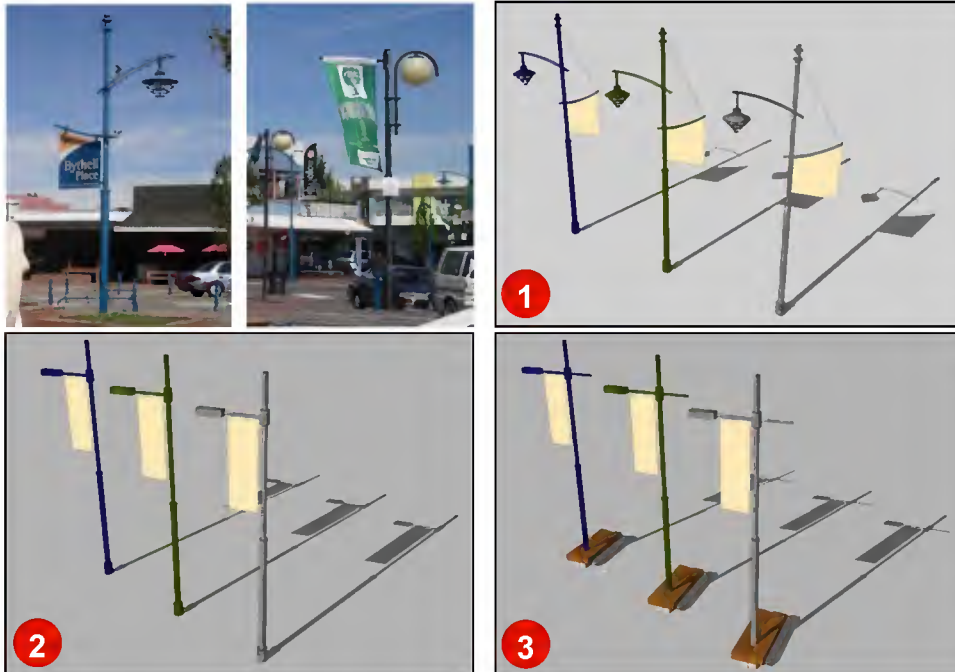


ABOVE FIG. 5-73: Conceptual plan for Bythell Place.

5.6.4 Options for changes to street furniture

Changes to the current streetscape elements of Market Street are proposed:

- Upgrading these elements to create a more contemporary image.
 - Since the lampposts are generally well positioned and their number is appropriate, it is recommended to consider alterations to the existing lampposts. Three incremental options are proposed:
 1. Paint existing lampposts in more contemporary colours and use different colour coding for different typical routes or precincts, which could assist with way finding;
 2. Previous option + replace the top half of the post with a more modern lamp fitting and increased lighting intensity;
 3. Previous option + Integrate seating, to remove some of the stand-alone furniture.
- Investigate a street design review to remove some of the physical clutter such as bollards in areas where vehicles could not have accessed anyway and review potential options for the relocation of removed street furniture to new locations.



ABOVE FIG. 5-74: Current lamp post design - Upgrade option 1: colour coding - option 2: replace top half - option 3: integration of seating



ABOVE FIG. 5-75: Area of increasing night life activity in upper Scott street, Maxwell Road and around Bythell Place

5.6.5 Streetscape upgrades

In addition to the proposed footpath upgrades (Strategic Theme 2) and street tree plan (Strategic Theme 4), a more integrated streetscape upgrade is proposed for the upper Scott Street area where an increasing number of nightlife entertainment facilities are located such as restaurants, pubs and the cinema. The upgrade will increase the continuity between Market Street and Scott Street and will support the activities through improved amenity. The upgrade will include footpath pavement, vandalism proof furniture such as benches, lampposts and rubbish bins, and street planting.

The upgrade should spill over into Kinross Street to include the area with problematic lighting in the western part of this street, in front of the cinema and the Thai restaurant (refer to Strategic Theme 2). This will also entice users of Stadium 2000, which is located in the eastern part of Kinross, into this area and possibly further north into Market Street or Bythell Place.

5.6.6 Cost estimation, timeline & prioritisation

Ref.*	page	Action	Admin./ Physical	Timeline: short (<2yrs); medium (2- 5 yrs); long (>5yrs)	Priority: high/ medium/ low	Comments/ assumptions
A1	77	Open Space reconstruction of Market Place.	physical	Short term	High	
A2	78	Open Space reconstruction of Bythell Place.	physical	Short term	High	
O1	79	Investigate the alteration of lamp posts (see drawings: three incremental options: colour coding, replace top half, integrate seating).	admin first, possibly physical	Short term	Medium	
O2	79	Investigate a street design review to move some of the physical clutter such as bollards in areas where vehicles could not have accessed anyway and review potential options for the relocation of removed street furniture to new locations.	admin first, possibly physical	Short term	Medium	
O3	79	Improve streetscape (including new street trees) in Wynen St in conjunction with new development of Farmers.	physical	Short term	High	
O6	79	Improve streetscape in Scott St between Main St and Francis St.	physical	Short term	High	
O7	79	Improve streetscape (including new street trees) in Kinross St between Scott St and Redwood St.	physical	Short term	Medium	

*) Refers to Blenheim Town Centre Draft Implementation Strategy