

SHARE THE WEALTH

SHARED SPACES MAKE GREAT BUSINESS PLACES

**AUCKLAND
DESIGN MANUAL**
TE PUKA WHAKATAIRANGA | A TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU

STREETS // STREETS CASE STUDY

Fort St Precinct
Shared Surface, Auckland

OVERVIEW

Fort Street showcases the important role shared surfaces can play in using street space more efficiently to create new destinations and improved economic performance for adjacent businesses.

Fort Street has been widely acknowledged as an international exemplar 'shared space', and since its completion has delivered massive uplift in footfall and turnover for surrounding businesses in the neighbourhood.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The term 'shared space' refers to the approach of removing any clear demarcation between vehicles and pedestrians, prioritising the pedestrian and enabling them to 'share the street in a more equitable and efficient manner.

Fort Street is one of several new 'shared spaces' implemented in Auckland's CBD in recent years to enhance pedestrian connectivity, and provide much-needed additional outdoor space for adjacent businesses to capitalise on the underused street space. Fort Street itself is close to the city's waterfront, and follows the original, pre-reclamation shoreline, linking to some of the city's earliest streets.

In 2008 the Fort Street area was identified as having significant potential for transformation into a more attractive and user-friendly environment. Consequently six streets in the area were selected for receiving a high quality upgrade.

The project removed conventional kerbs and installed a single level paving surface across the full width of the street to create the shared space.

The work began in 2009 and was carried out in three stages between 2010 and 2013.



Fort Street – looking towards Queen Street past Jean Batten Place and Commerce Street.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

STREET TYPE

CITY CENTRE LOCAL ROADS
CITY CENTRE LANES

PROJECT EXTENT

FOUR AREAS IN AND
AROUND FORT STREET

DESIGN TEAM

BOFFA MISKELL -
DESIGN & LANDSCAPE

Jawa structures - civil engineers
TPC - traffic planning
LDP: -lighting design
with dominion contractors

PROJECT DATES

2009-2013

PROJECT COST

\$23 MILLION

Largely funded by the CBD targeted rate, a special business rate paid for by CBD residents, businesses and property owners.

PROJECT TYPE

SHARED SPACES

TRAFFIC CALMING

Staged improvements to Fort, Commerce and Gore Streets - local streets in CBD, and Jean Batten Place and Fort Lane - adjacent pedestrian lanes.

KEY PROJECT WORKS

SHARED SPACE ENVIRONMENT

High quality upgrade to repurpose streets as places for people.

Upgrade included both 'shared space' treatments and more conventional streetscape improvements to calm and reduce the traffic.

CLIENT

AUCKLAND COUNCIL

PROJECT SPONSOR

MANAGER, CBD PROJECTS,
AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL

VEHICLE ACCESS

Vehicles are still permitted in the streets. Limited street parking provided.

OTHER FACTS

Extensive pre and post construction evaluation and monitoring was carried out for this project. Some of the "headline" data follows:

429% increase in hospitality spending

47% increase in consumer spending

50% Increase in pedestrians during peak hours.

80% of those surveyed felt safer in the area now than they did previously, especially at night time.

Over 75% of property owners said it was valuable being sited near or adjacent to a shared space.

25% Less vehicle volume

2-8km/hour reduction in average vehicle speed

PROJECT GOALS

1. Better integrate the area into the surrounding street network.
2. Provide greater pedestrian priority.
3. Create a distinctive public space and provide opportunities for the area to be a popular destination in the city centre
4. Create a space that supports businesses and residents and provides opportunities for a variety of activities.
5. Provide a high quality, attractive and durable street that contributes to a sustainable and maintainable city centre.



Looking down Jean Batten Place towards Fort Street.

UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN PROCESS

1. The Fort Street Precinct Upgrade is part of the 10 year CBD upgrade programme that started in 2004.

2. This project had a clear, overarching vision of what the works should achieve. To this end:

- Extensive research was undertaken into overseas shared space projects.

- Auckland Council was committed to the importance of robust testing of both the design and the construction methodologies, and provided the funding to ensure this work occurred at the appropriate stage.

- Strong collaboration with suppliers, contractors and maintenance staff enabled rigorous testing of construction elements.

- A defined decision-making and approvals process was established for all project stages.

3. Council's robust process methodology and programme included a clear engagement process and the early involvement of all key stakeholders to ensure they all understood the concept of shared space and were engaged throughout the process. Some key stakeholders included all local business owners and operators, the Royal NZ Foundation for the Blind and Disability groups.

4. An experienced and skilled Council "Design Champion" was nominated who was capable of communicating the vision, design intentions and the desired outcomes to multiple audiences. Post construction Auckland Council introduced a shared space awareness and education campaign; ongoing on-site Enforcement Officers are used to educate and inform motorists.



Fort Lane, before and after works – looking towards Customs Street.

GETTING IT RIGHT 1. DESIGN STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES (BEFORE)



Fort Street 2009 – view from Queen Street end.

GETTING IT RIGHT 1. DESIGN STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES (AFTER)

1. The creation of a shared space has brought about a significant increase in the numbers of pedestrians who visit the area, up 47% at peak hours.
2. Since their introduction the shared spaces have become recognized as places and destinations in their own right, with 49% of people interviewed indicating they would visit the area more often.
3. The shared streets provide more space for pedestrians to move around in, sit in and relax in.
4. The shared spaces provide more space for outdoor activities such as outdoor dining, events and gatherings.
5. The upgrade of the street and lanes to public places has created street vibrancy, boosted local businesses and resulted in significant investment in the area.

* Evaluation Report, Executive Summary July 2012. Prepared for Auckland Council by Auckland Transport(AT) and Ascari.



Fort Street 2011 – view from Queen Street end.

GETTING IT RIGHT 2. DESIGN FOR CONTEXT

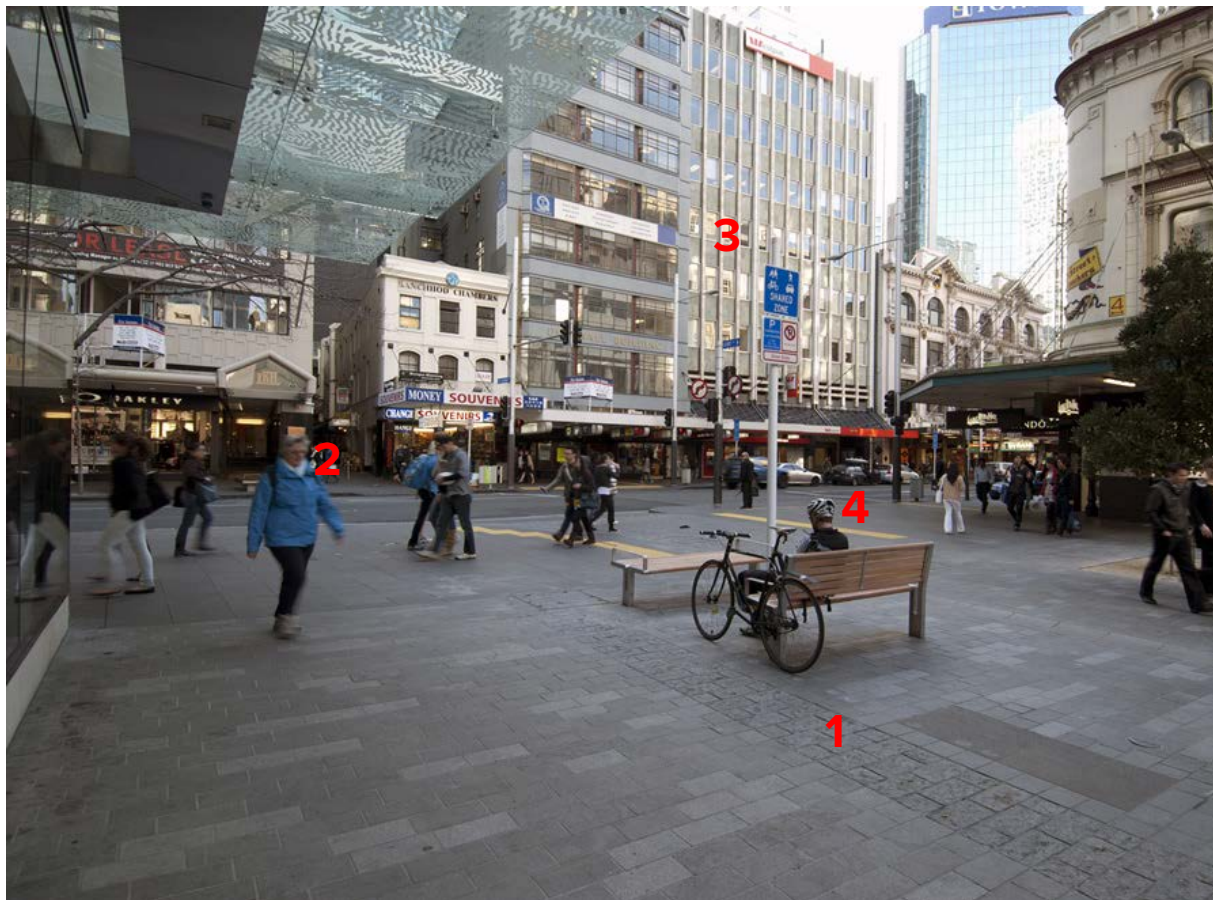
1. As the Fort Street Upgrade is located in one of the oldest parts of Auckland, the design and materials are both subtle and timeless to act as a backdrop for some grand historic buildings.
2. The emphasis on creating spaces for pedestrians in this location is wholly appropriate given the precinct's location adjacent to Queen Street (Auckland's High street), the waterfront and Brittomart, the city's main transport hub.
3. Fort Street as the former pre-reclamation shoreline (historic context) is acknowledged by way of beautiful design elements : e.g. small indentations that capture and retain the water. The use of the coastal native, the pohutukawa also references Fort Street's coastal edge
4. The street network provides a number of alternative routes for vehicles to avoid Fort Street and surrounding shared spaces, ensuring spaces remain lightly trafficked.



Birds eye view of Fort Street and Queen Street junction.

GETTING IT RIGHT 3. DESIGN FOR CONNECTIVITY

1. The streets and lanes form a visually and materially connected network by way of the use of a consistent palette of materials.
2. The pedestrianisation of the Fort Street Precinct enables stronger integration of the area into the surrounding street network.
3. The Precinct now functions as an important, high quality connector, connecting Queen Street (Auckland's Main Street), Brittomart, the city's main transport hub, and the waterfront.
4. Walking and cycling connections have been strengthened throughout this area as a result of this shared space project.



Looking towards Queen Street from Fort Street.

GETTING IT RIGHT 4. DESIGN FOR SAFETY

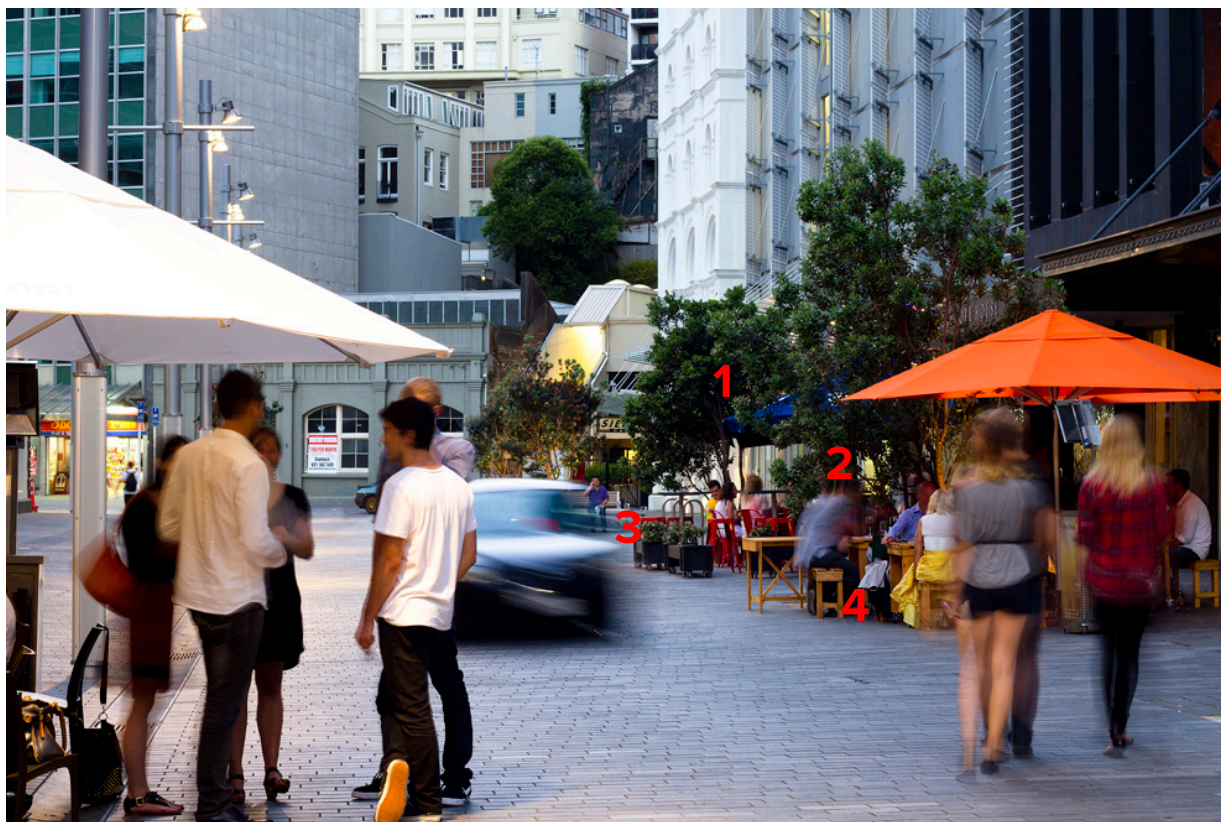
1. The implementation of the shared surface concept—using a continuous paved surface in the material and detailing with out any clear definition of a ‘car area’ or pedestrian area’ forces motorists to slow down to be able to read and respond to the uncertainty of the space. As a direct result of the upgrade vehicle speeds dropped by 5-9 km/hr .
2. The investment in high quality materials, a wide range of quality street furniture and improved lighting invites people to inhabit the spaces day and night. This presence of people helps create a perception of safety and over 80% of Aucklanders surveyed felt safer in the area than they had previously.
3. Traffic offending has dropped and no injury or crashes have been reported since completion, highlighting the important role shared surfaces can play in enhancing pedestrian safety.



Fort Street – birds eye of Fort Street (Queen Street end).

GETTING IT RIGHT 5. DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

1. The layout and detailing of areas adjacent to the building edge has been kept simple to accommodate changing business activities over time.
2. Certain existing historic built elements have been retained and restored including the basement lightwells of heritage buildings
3. Original kerbs were reused on some streets as well as along Fort Street to edge the tree pits and reveal the lightwells.
4. Permeable paving was used around the trees, to minimise storm water overflow and to irrigate the trees.



Looking down Fort Street – Gore Street end.

GETTING IT RIGHT 6. DESIGN AND PLAN STREETS TO BE FIT FOR PURPOSE

1. Clear, high-level design objectives were set for the project that included providing a high quality, attractive and durable street that contributed to a sustainable and maintainable city centre.
2. Simple detailing and minimal number of materials used across project to minimise maintenance requirements and maximise flexibility for change.
3. Construction methods and materials specifications were rigorously tested and reviewed at key stages to ensure the design was fully appropriate, durable and flexible.
4. Comprehensive technical investigations were undertaken of both rigid and flexible pavement construction types, jointing, bedding and finishing issues to ensure the high quality ground surface would stand up to the demands of heavy vehicles. (JAWA Structures and peer reviewed by Tonkin and Taylor Ltd.)
5. A combined services trench for utilities has future proofed the project and minimised future maintenance costs.
6. A “whole-of-life” approach was taken for all aspects of this project; this included, importantly, a whole-of-life economic analysis.



Fort Street - Gore Street end (left), Fort Lane looking towards Customs Street (right).

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The Auckland Design Manual provides practical advice, best practice processes and detailed design guidance to enable us to design and build the world's most liveable city. The manual will enable us all to make informed choices, to build houses and develop our streets and neighbourhoods to not only look good but to ensure they are built to last, sustainable and give the best return on investment.

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