Urban Design Charter

9 Values for Quality Places

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Urban Design in the Moreton Bay Region

Moreton Bay Region is exceptionally diverse with environments ranging from the very urban to that of small country towns and localities. Its location between Brisbane City and the Sunshine Coast has resulted in a level of growth that has been and remains within the highest for local governments in the country.

The Urban Design Charter and its Nine Values for Good Places has been developed to guide this growth in a more sustainable and efficient manner.

Council recognises that urban places are complex and require an integrated and holistic approach to their management. It also recognises that good quality urban design has an essential role in developing strong and sustainable communities in quality places.

Why Urban Design?

People use the urban environments of the region. They use the centres, streets, civic spaces, community facilities, neighbourhoods, transport and shopping services that provide the urban settings in which they live, work, play, learn, shop and more. The design and planning of the different parts of the urban environment, and how they are connected and interact, are central to how well these urban environments are meeting the needs of the community and visitors.

In particular the urban design of the region significantly affects its economic vitality, community well-being and environmental sustainability. It influences how well our regional community will be able to respond proactively to important trends such as climate change, changing lifestyles, innovative communications technology and an ageing community.

The Moreton Bay Regional Council therefore seeks, on behalf of its present and future community, to provide leadership in developing and managing our towns, suburbs and other urban environments to deliver the best practical urban communities. This document looks to advance the understanding of public decision-makers, developers, investors, planning and design professionals, and the community at large as to how best to pursue and deliver the goal of high quality urban design for the region.

'Urban design is often said to be a matter of working in three dimensions, compared to the two dimensions of land use or policy planning. In fact urban design should be four dimensional, the fourth dimension being time.'

Designing Places, Scotland

Vital **Distinctive** **Creative** **Safe** **Healthy** **Responsive** **Adaptable** **Connected** **Accessible**

The Nature of Urban Design

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Urban Design relates to the way people use towns and neighbourhoods.

We all use the built environment in varying ways to live, work and play. We connect with it every day. We rely on its ability to provide for our needs, enhance our lives and improve our futures. We all have a stake in making sure it works the best for us.

Council's urban design goal is therefore to consider how to make places that work best for us, from the region as a whole to neighbourhoods and precincts and to individual public spaces, streets and buildings.

Its goal considers both new development and the enhancement of existing places and connections.

It is concerned with good design, not just aesthetically but practically, that is, with how the urban environment works in providing for the economic, cultural, social and environmental needs of people and places.

By its nature, urban design seeks to draw together all the things that help a place perform at its best. It is inherently complex and therefore requires a broad integrated approach using the contributions of many different professional bodies of advice and experience.

Council considers that better urban places, contributing to strong and sustainable communities, will only be developed and maintained as a result of collaboration between built environment professionals, government and the community.

Best Practice in Urban Design

There is great variation in the types and needs of the communities that make up the Moreton Bay Region.

These differences across the region reflect the different locations, histories, roles, sizes and environments found across the region.

Equally urban design responses to development will vary from place to place and across types. For example urban design requirements in centres are different in many ways to those of residential streets; in parks different from transport nodes. Yet there are significant common approaches and priorities that apply generally to making good places for people.

Drawing upon the experiences of successful urban design practice within the region, the country and internationally and combined with thoughtful informed consideration of the future needs of the region, it is possible to identify significant principles for sustainable urban design which should apply in most cases.

'The art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes which facilitate successful development.'

By Design. UK.

Vital   **Distinctive**   **Creative**   **Safe**   **Healthy**   **Responsive**   **Adaptable**   **Connected**   **Accessible**

Sustainable Urban Places

The resulting material is consistent with thinking about best practice sustainable urban design in many other places and as expressed in the contemporary professional literature, insofar as they are relevant to the region's needs.

Since Council will seek to use this material as a basis for developing planning and design policies and detailed guidance, it has sought to make the expression of urban design ideas both practical and clear to the widest relevant audience.

Council, through this document, seeks to enhance the collaborative pursuit of better places by discussing both the generally agreed qualities of good urban places and a range of urban design strategies best suited to achieve them.

Sustainable urban environments encourage economic and social vitality by creating places that provide for and promote interaction and exchange.

They are places that are safe, healthy and respectful of the needs of all.

They are comfortable, attractive and enjoyable places to be in.

They add to the effectiveness, enjoyment and vitality of places by mixing opportunities for working, shopping, socialising, recreating, celebrating and residing in designed ways.

They are places that provide for social sustainable outcomes that meet the needs of different age groups and household types over time, through a range and diversity of housing types at appropriate and varying densities.

They are places that provide for social sustainability through civic and other opportunities for community interaction in highly accessible places.

They provide a range of urban environments that seek to satisfy different cultural and social needs.

Designing and locating different parts of towns and neighbourhoods in ways that facilitate efficient low-energy, low-pollution movement and productive creative relationships between them, can deliver a greater sustainability in the built environment. By lessening the environmental footprint of the urban form, urban design enhances the environmental sustainability of a place.

Further increases in conservation of water, energy and material resources can be achieved through the detailed design of buildings and the public realm.

Urban design has an important and integral role to play in the development and maintenance of good urban places. It can be a significant tool in aiding the balancing act of decision making between competing economic, social and environmental priorities.

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URBAN DESIGN

ATTRACTIVE, Authentic, Unique, **Distinctive**, Identity, Belonging, Diversity, Creativity, Pride, Variety, Cultural, Social, Ownership, Character, Feel, Image, Civic Value, Interesting, **Creative**, Experiences, Imaginative, Innovative, Art, Technologies, Ideas, Activity, **Vital**, Human, Dense, Fine-grained, Vibrant, Mix, Economic, Linked, Integrated, Viable, **Safe**, Friendly, Welcoming, Secure, **Healthy**, Defined, Positive, Context, Community, Setting, Heritage, **Responsive**, Identity, Subtropical, Natural, Built, Addressed, Humane, **Responsible**, Rich, Flexible, Robust, Change, Adaptable, Resilient, Dynamic, Evolving, **ACCESSIBLE**, Network, Opportunities, **Connected**, Integrated, Transparent, Pedestrian, Walkable, Shade, Shelter, Surveillance, **Permeable**, Urban Structure, Choice, Comprehendible, Understandable, Logical, Hierarchy, Navigate, **Legible**.

Vital

Distinctive

Creative

Safe

Healthy

Responsive

Adaptable

Connected

Accessible

Values for Quality 9Places

Quality Places

7 Design places that are beautiful, stimulating and enjoyable to be in. Places that recognise and seek to satisfy the needs of individuals within a community as well as the community as a whole. These are places that attract us, where we aspire to live, work and visit as the qualities of the place make it enjoyable and supportive.

They are:
- often places which develop a strong sense of identity and belonging where the inherent qualities of the place reinforce the sense of community for the people who use them.
- distinctive places that recognise the uniqueness of the locality they are part of.
- creative places where a sense of civic value and pride is encouraged and celebrated through creative and innovative design.
- convenient places that sustainably and appropriately meet a variety of demands in the one location.
- vital and lively places that provide extensive opportunities for economic and social interaction and exchange with an inherent liveliness the result of a mix of uses, activities, and experiences that satisfy the aspirations of a spectrum of users, through the day, the seasons or over the years.
- places where, by design, the human need for privacy and control is particularly respected.

- quiet, contemplative places to relax and enjoy being human.
- healthy and safe places. Since good places are inherently about people and their design must make them not only safe and secure to use but also supportive of healthy lifestyles.
- places that the individual can easily connect with and navigate through.
- logical with an easily understood street layouts, which are well organised with a clear and distinct hierarchy of paths and landmarks, providing a foundation for an accessible and legible built environment.
- places where the public realm is a well connected network of roads, paths, cycleways and spaces that enhance choice and increase the interaction with the built environment.
- places that are designed to respond well to the characteristics of the locality, relating well to the local community the context, the setting and the surroundings.
- places that recognise that change is inevitable and good places accommodate and use it to their enhancement.

These good practical values of urban design are relevant to the provision of mixed-use centres, residential precincts, civic or parklike spaces, major health and educational institutions, transport facilities, employment concentrations, cultural and community facilities.

JAMES STREET
LOOKING WESTWARDS FROM STATION FORECOURT
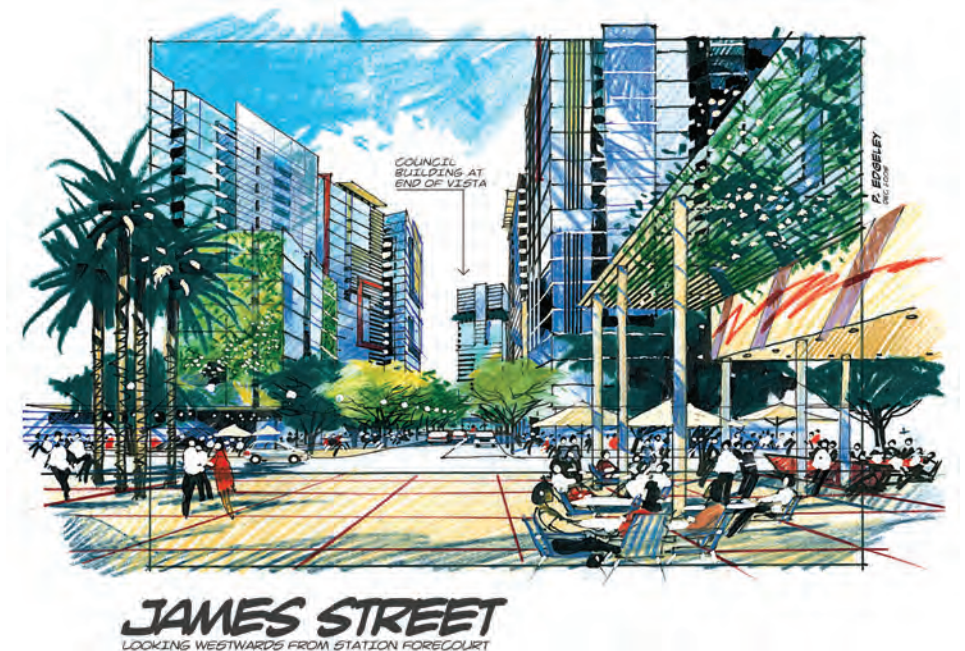
Distinctive
Creative
& Vital
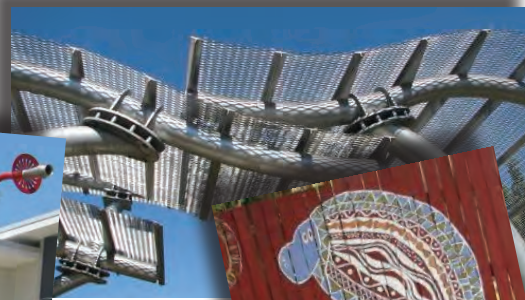
Create places that have a lively mix of uses, activities and experiences to satisfy the aspirations and needs of a wide spectrum of the community.

Unique places where people feel a sense of ownership and belonging. These are diverse and creative places where pride in community is encouraged through the design of public spaces.

Places that support imaginative and innovative solutions to providing quality built environments. Places where there is an understanding of the value of new technologies and ideas in developing a better and more responsive community.

Places where diversity and variety in the built environment enriches the quality of life of all, where cultural and social mix is celebrated. They rejoice the distinctive character of the locality and the community's unique feel and image. Avoid creating places with an 'artificial' or borrowed character from localities with a different context and/or climate.

Design places where social and economic transaction, are created, nurtured and enhanced through positive and active public environments.

These vital, distinctive and creative places are the places where the quality of design enhances our experience of the built environment.

Safe & Healthy

Design places that support healthy lifestyles by ensuring that walkablity is intrinsic in their design, where being to traverse through and between them on foot safely and without barriers is a natural outcome.

Design places using the principles of crime prevention through design to ensure that the built environment is inherently safe and secure for all as well as being perceived to be safe.

Design places that are inherently safe and secure to ensure that users are comfortable and at ease in the built environment.

Places that display these traits of health and safety are places that people like to be in and return to.

'Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context—a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan.'

Eliel Sarinen

Responsive & Adaptable

Build on the distinctive local qualities of places such as their cultural history, topography, relationship to the natural landscape' built heritage or community diversity to make them special and memorable.

Design places that are human in scale and pedestrian in nature to ensure they respond well to the needs of the community.

Thoughtfully design places to be sustainable, to work well now while preparing them as much as possible to adapt to change in the future. This can best be achieved by designing places that respond to the subtropical climate and local conditions of the region. In response to forecast climate change, resource depletion and the like, design places to reduce their environmental footprint and accommodate changes in weather and lifestyles.

These are places that acknowledge and enhance the value, character, heritage and identity that is intrinsic to them. In this way, places should be designed to be flexible and robust with the ability to absorb and adapt to change over the short and long term. These places need to be resilient, dynamic and evolving enough to provide for changes in context, culture, fashion and user needs.

These places that respond and adapt well to change are often places that contain well informed and engaged communities.

Design places that are logical, easily understood, well organised, with a clear and distinct network of paths and spaces. The ability to understand the essential structure and nature of a place is important for the casual user or visitor in developing a 'sense of place'.

To provide this understanding of a place and its makeup, design places where the street layout is not just the movement structure in an area, but also the fundamental structure or 'skeleton' for the public and private realms. In most cases use 'permeable' networks of 'normal' streets with high people amenity and frequent interconnections.

Provide the user with significant buildings, view corridors, civic spaces and public art or street cafés as landmarks for navigating through the built environment. Landmark features are important 'navigation beacons' providing a foundation for an accessible built environment.

Places where all the senses are used to navigate and understand the built environment through texture, colour, light and shade, smell and sound are more accessible to all and more enjoyable to be in.

Provide frequent points of interconnection between paths and modes to increase multiple opportunities for social interaction and informal "connection" with others in the community. These places improve the levels of choice and social sustainability.

In this way places can be designed that are easily comprehended and assist the individual to easily understand, connect with, use and navigate through them.
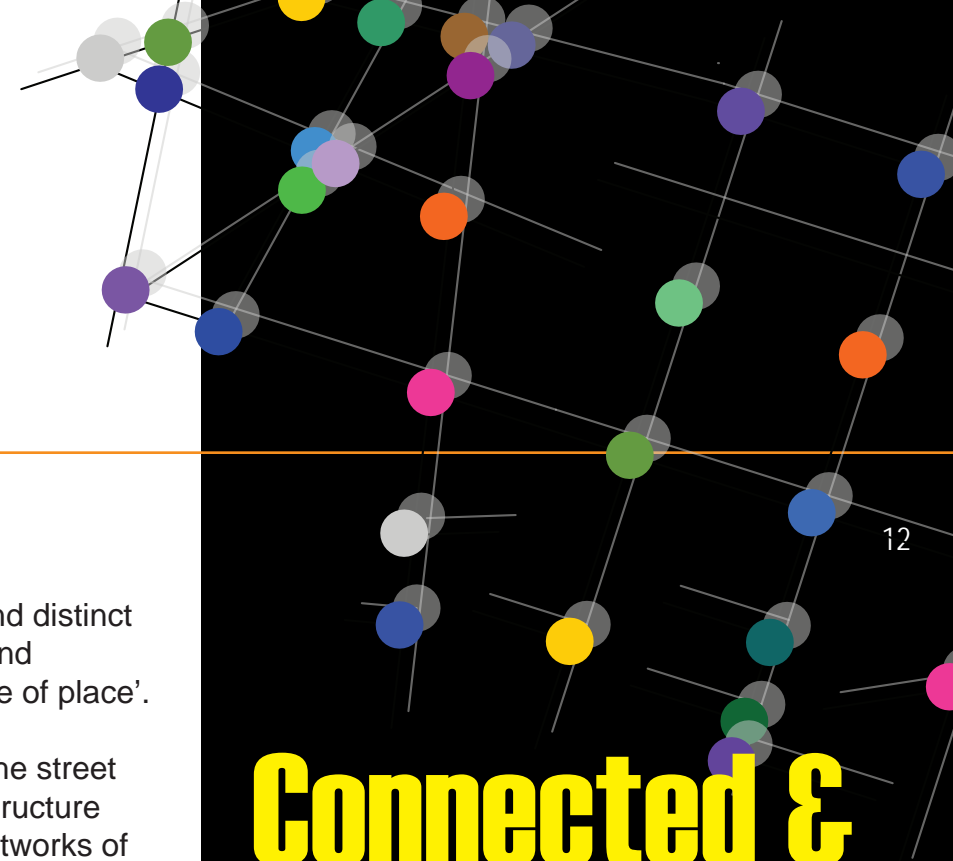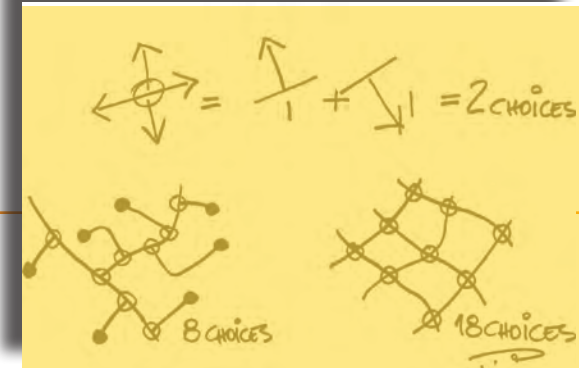
Connected &
Accessible
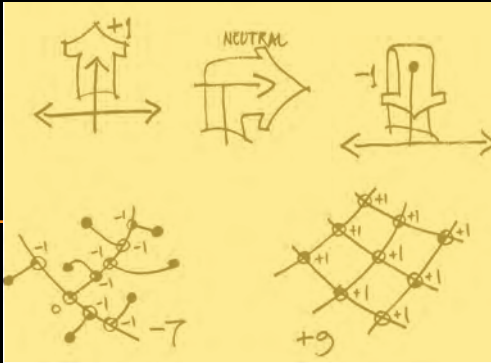
Legible

Accessible Places are legible places being easily understood and comprehended.

They are places that rely on all the senses (texture, colour, light and shade, smell and sound) to navigate and understand the built environment.

Places that the individual can easily connect with and navigate through. They are logical with an easily understood street layout, which is well organised with a clear and distinct hierarchy of paths, and landmarks provide a foundation for an accessible and legible built environment.

'Urban design in which blocks of buildings are fully permeated by an interconnected street network. Encourages: Ease of access and a greater spread of traffic movement Discourages: Inefficient movement and an oppressive sense of impenetrability'

The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment

These are places where there are defined edges to the street, town, neighbourhood or community, ensuring strong cues to the places makeup.

Places that are well understood are essential to a individual's 'sense of place'.


Permeable

Accessible places are permeable providing considerable choice of access through, to and out of at all scales.

They are places that are safely and easily accessible by all with little to no physical or cultural barriers.

Where many links and connections form a network of streets, paths, cycleways and spaces providing a myriad of choices, increased opportunity for interaction and a richer built environment.

Simple tests for determining accessibility.
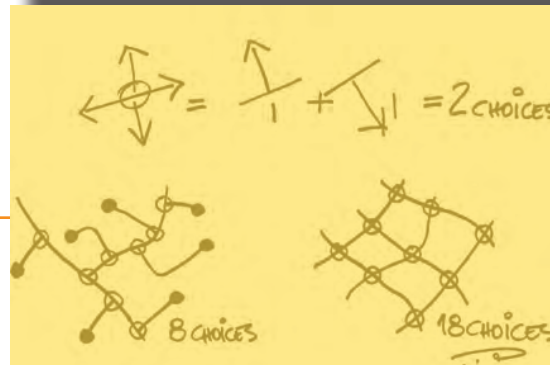
Walkable

Accessible Places that are walkable when the pedestrian is considered first in designs.

Where the scale of the built environment is based on dimensions determined through understanding people as pedestrians.

Where streets are well connected with short distances between links and no dead ends or cul-de-sacs.
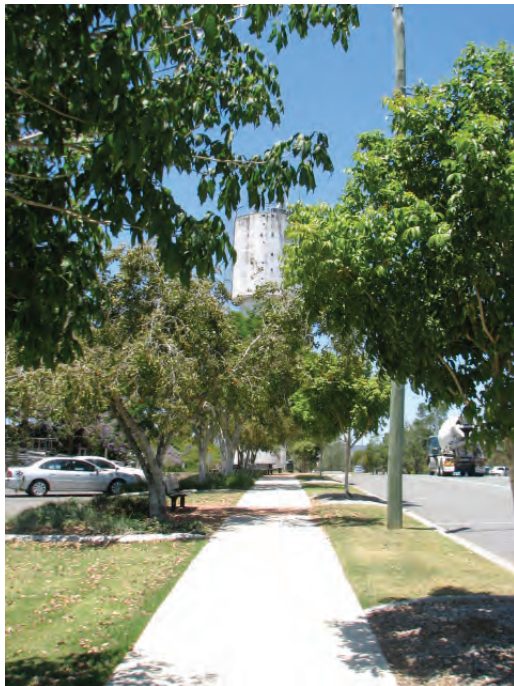
Places where the comfort and amenity of the pedestrian is considered paramount by providing shade and shelter with awnings over the footpath in the centres and canopy trees along footpaths in residential areas.

Places that are safe for the pedestrian through casual surveillance from buildings that directly address the street and windows and openings that link with the street at all levels.

Conclusion

The nature of the urban environment is an essential part of the pursuit of a socially, economically, culturally and environmentally more sustainable regional community.

Council's leadership in urban design is therefore an important part of its strategy.

Based on experience and contemporary analysis, it is possible to identify urban design approaches which can help deliver places that provide a robust supporting structure for good quality places. The 9 Values for Quality Places presented here have been developed to provide this structure.

The approaches provided here are consistent with important urban design and planning thinking found elsewhere in the state and the nation. They are consistent with the principles and approaches to place-making in documents such as:

- The South East Queensland Regional Plan
- The Queensland CPTED Guidelines
- The Integrated Transport Plan
- and the principles of Smart Growth.

Council is confident therefore of the importance of this initiative and welcomes comment in its pursuit of a productive collaborative relationship with industry, other decision-makers and, importantly, the community of the Moreton Bay Region.

MAIN STREET

Vital   **Distinctive**   **Creative**   **Safe**   **Healthy**

'Sense of Place', Identity, Belonging, Memory, Connection in Moreton Bay Region.....

'A Sense of Place

*Creating somewhere that
is recognisably distinct but
simultaneously strengthens
local identity.'*

Urban Design Partnerships, UK.

Responsive   **Adaptable**   **Connected**   **Accessible**

Urban

Coastal

'Sense of Place', Identity, Belonging, Memory, Connection in Moreton Bay Region......

'Urban Design
is concerned with the design of the buildings, places,
spaces and networks that make up our towns and
cities, and the ways people use them. It ranges in
scale from a metropolitan region, city or town down
to a street, public space or even a single building.'

Urban Design Protocol, NZ.

A Glossary of Urban Design Terms

Accessibility: The ease at which people can move around and between places and facilities.

Adaptability: The ability of a building or space to be adjusted to respond to changing physical, social, technological and economic conditions.

Bulk: The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings.

Character: All places (space, building, landscape etc) have a personality, a character. The quality of that character however can vary considerably.

Context: The setting that a site or area sit within and includes its relationship to its neighbours, its place in the street, the neighbourhood and the region, and includes factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and the built form.

Elevation: The external face of a building/object as seen from each direction including the roof.

Enclosure: The level to which a space is defined by the surrounding buildings, structures and landscape elements.

Façade: The elevation of a building especially that which fronts a street.

Form: The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

Human Scale: The spatial qualities of the relationship, an item, a space, building or structure has to an individual human, where they feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed by its scale or mass.

Landmark: A building, structure or space that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

Landscape: The character and appearance of the environment, including its shape, form, ecology, features, colours and elements and the way these components combine.

Legibility: The degree to which a place can be easily understood and navigated.

Distinctiveness: The features of a place and its communities which contribute to its uniqueness, authenticity, character and sense of place.

Massing: The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

Mixed uses: A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area.

Modal Split: How the total number of journeys in an area or to a destination is split between different means of transport such as train, bus, car, walking and cycling.

Natural/Casual Surveillance: The level of surveillance that occurs in a place due to the intermittent observation of passers by or those going about their normal business in the adjoining buildings and spaces. The lack of good levels of this type of surveillance has a considerable impact on the perceived and real security of a place.

PEDESTRIAN LINK FROM KING ST

RESIDENTIAL BLDGS WITH VIEWS OVER LAKE & COMMERCIAL MIXED USE BEHIND

P. EDGELEY

LAKE VIEW
LOOKING NORTHWARDS

Node/Centre: A place where activity and routes are concentrated.

Permeability: The number of convenient and safe choices that are available to pass into, through and around an area.

Public Domain/Realm: The parts of a place that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see including streets, squares and parks.

Scale: The relationship that one piece or part thereof of the built environment has with another part or the whole. It can be considered at the scale of the region, individual towns, neighbourhoods or the local street.

Sense of Scale: (See also human scale) It can be the relationship of a building or space to its surrounds, a part of the building or space or its details to the building or space as a whole. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building or space which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined.

Street Furniture: Structures and items of landscape in and adjacent to the street that contribute to the street scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting, railings and signs.

Walkability: A place's inherent ability to be traversed with ease by pedestrians. Consideration should also be given to those who are aged, with children or who are pushing a stroller or have physical disabilities.

Many of these definitions were developed from those found in
'By Design—Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice.'
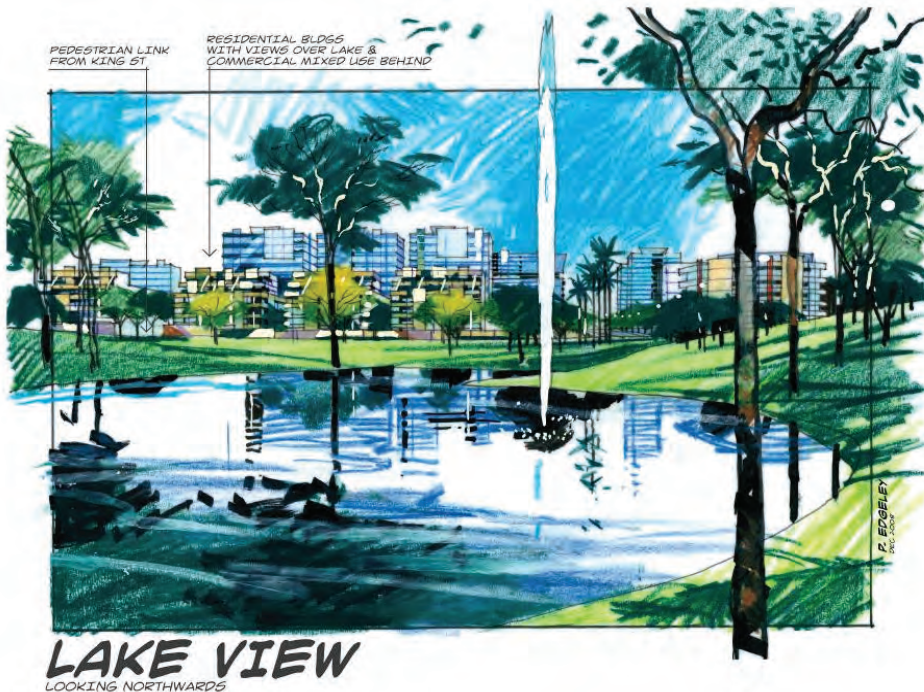
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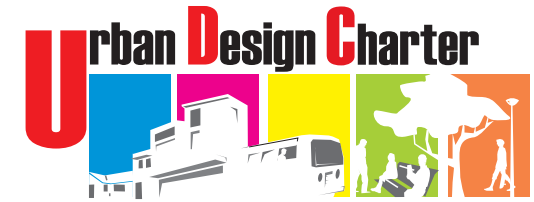
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Notes:

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Values for Quality Places

9

Moreton Bay
Regional Council