

CHAPTER 3

PROPOSED URBAN STRUCTURE

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The urban design rationale outlined in the previous chapter provides the conceptual basis for the proposed urban structure of Century City. The urban structure is explained more fully in this Chapter. All interventions, both in the public environment and private development should be consistent with the urban design rationale and the proposed urban structure.

Developers and their professional teams should also comply with the directives formulated in the following chapters which deal with design guidelines.

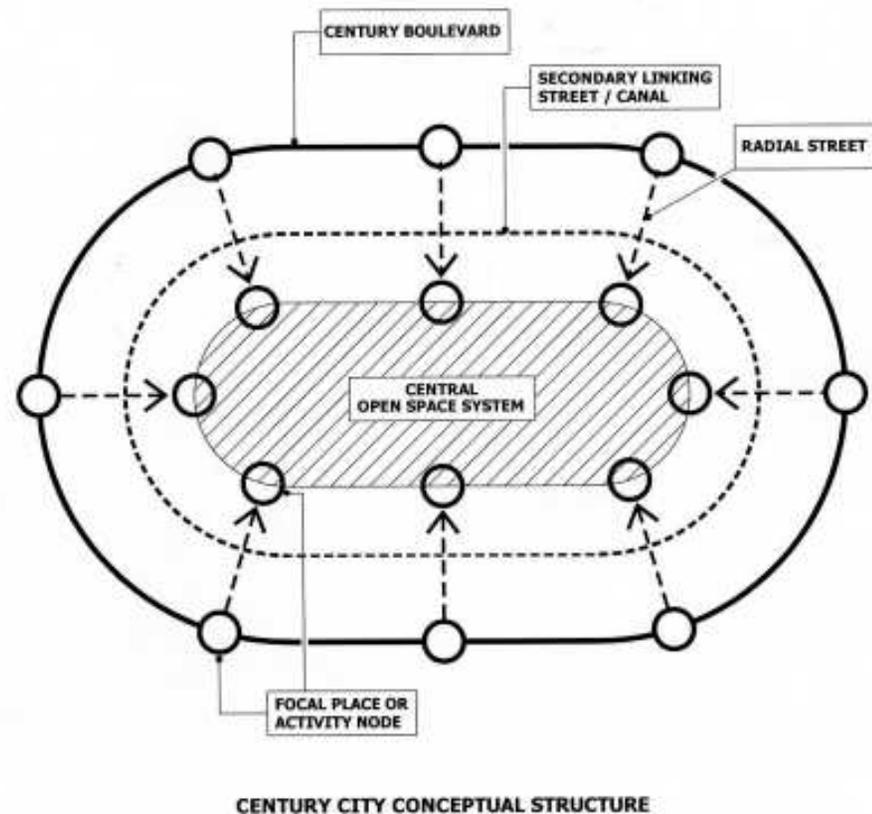
Two principles underly the structuring of the site. These are:

- to enhance and protect the open space and water system as the focal feature of Century City and
- to infuse new life to the overall development by making Century Boulevard a vibrant and attractive urban boulevard, a pedestrian friendly space and a prestigious address.

The open space system and Century Boulevard therefore form the two primary features of Century City, and constitute the skeleton of the urban structure. They are arranged in a concentric form, and the pattern is completed by a network of radial "public" streets (both pedestrian and vehicular). These streets provide direct access to the various properties and linkages between the two primary features of the site.

Nodal system

The places where radial streets intersect Century Boulevard, form natural focal points (nodes), which are places of intensified activity. Linkages and their corresponding nodes are spaced along the boulevard at regular intervals so that good connectivity is achieved and walking distances are minimised. Focal places in the boulevard can adopt various forms and characteristics. Similarly, the places where radial linkages meet the main canal system, also constitute important focal points for enhanced activity.



MAIN STRUCTURING ELEMENTS

The proposed structure and various elements are described below. Note that this conceptual structure is evolving and the current urban form may be different in certain circumstances. However the main structuring elements remain relevant.

Urban gateways

These are the areas surrounding the main entrance points into Century City. They should create a sense of arrival into a different realm.

Main structuring spine

Century Boulevard is the "urban" hub of Century City, and should become a vibrant urban street and important address.

Open space system

The open space system provides a soft heart to Century City. It is formed by the Wetland, Ratanga Island, the Grand Canal and a linear network of narrower canals that connect these spaces. Water is a common feature of the open space system.

Strategic links

Functional and visual links between the Boulevard and open spaces create legibility and enable public access to and from these spaces. Linkages should be situated at regular intervals to achieve permeability and reduce walking distances, especially from public transport stops to major destinations.

Gateway squares

These urban spaces open up visual corridors from the Boulevard into the open space system and celebrate the main entrance points to Century City.

Streets

A network of pedestrian and vehicular streets connects the Boulevard with the open space system and development parcels. Public streets are essential components in Century City. Large developments that consolidate blocks must ensure permanent public right of way along these routes.



Terraces to water edge

The points at which Century Boulevard and the open space system (canals) cross one another, are significant places. However these cross at different levels, and the significance is not expressed along the Boulevard. Landscaped terraces and ramps can provide a direct connection between the Boulevard and the open space system, with direct public access to the water's edge from the Boulevard.

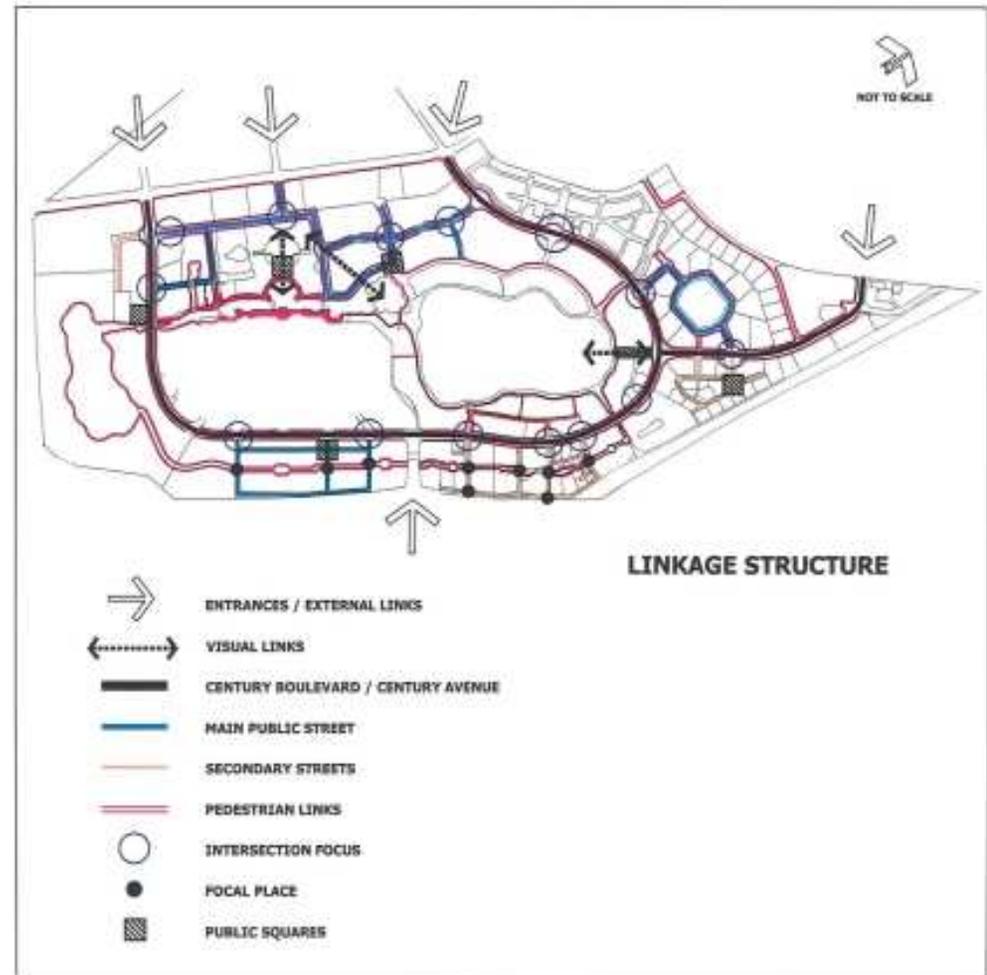
Primary nodes / focal places

The points at which the Boulevard and the open space system intersect with radial streets constitute important focal places. Nodes or focal places take on a character consistent with the form and function of the spaces they connect. In many cases nodes are situated at street corners. Although the drawing illustrates an overall pattern of nodes, detail position and characteristics of the various nodes will be provided on precinct-by-precinct basis.

LINKAGE STRUCTURE

The drawing opposite illustrates the network of vehicular and pedestrian links that interconnect Century City. The main spine, Century Boulevard, carries a large volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, while the internal open space system is predominantly a pedestrian realm. These two systems run "parallel" to one another, crossing only at four points.

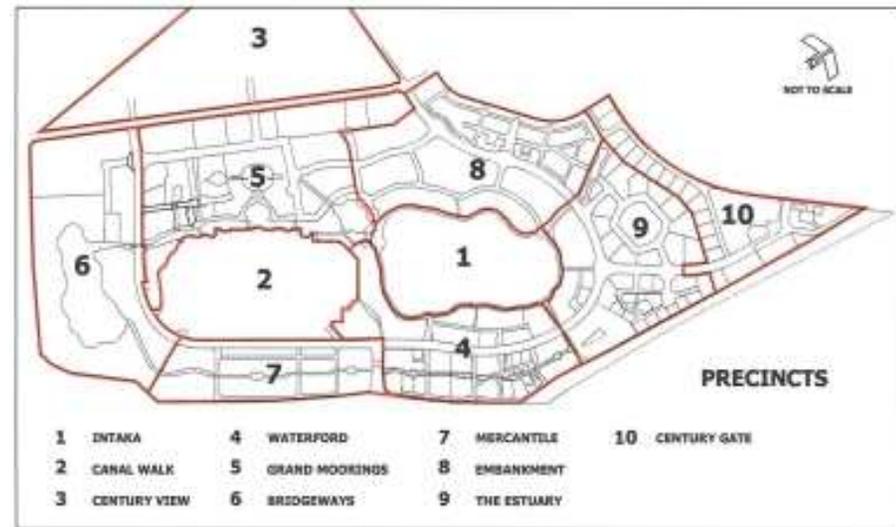
Visual and functional cross-links are necessary to connect the components of Century City. These links or streets, start and end in the form of focal places or nodes, both on the Boulevard and the open space system. In addition the places where linkages meet the water network are made visible through public squares of various sizes. The aim is to concentrate, a number of activities and facilities at each node, such as shuttle bus stops, raised pedestrian crossings, public phones, entrances to buildings, etc.



PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

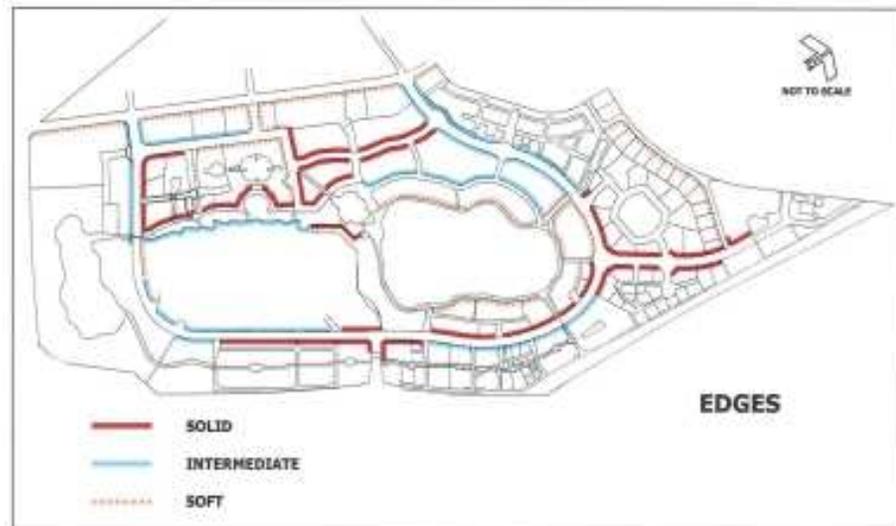
Private land for development has been packaged into precincts and individual land parcels. Precincts are groups of blocks that share common characteristics, such as their position within Century City or a distinctive relationship to other precincts.

Individual Precinct Plans are prepared for each precinct in accordance with the package of plans process. Precinct plans are compiled as and when required, but Chapter 5 provides an overview of the main features for several of these precincts. All development must comply with the directives provided in this Urban Design Framework as well as the relevant precinct plan.



EDGE INTERFACES

The drawing opposite indicates the edges of private development that interface with the public environment i.e. open space system, Century Boulevard, public streets and pedestrian links. Details of recommended edge responses are given as design informants on a precinct-by-precinct basis, because these differ from area to area. However common principles which are explained later in Chapter 5 need to be respected.



URBAN FOOTPRINT

The urban footprint drawing shown opposite illustrates, in a generic form, the overall pattern of the public environment (in white), while development blocks are shown in black. These blocks do not signify buildings, merely land parcels. This helps to highlight the contrast between the public environment and private development, and the importance of inter-connectivity between these components.

Information about the blocks, streets and open spaces are given as design informants in the precinct plans.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The drawing opposite illustrates the proposed structure with an overlay of development to date (June 2003). It is important to build upon existing features and, where possible implement remedial interventions at the edges of private development and the public realm, in order to achieve a better spatial definition and environmental quality.

Century Boulevard is a critical feature in this process. At the moment, the water seems to offer the main value and attraction to developers. By focussing attention on Century Boulevard, through redesign (within the same road reserve), it should be possible to infuse new life into this space. Strategic investment in the public environment and guidelines for private development to respond positively to the Boulevard, should help to create a new address attractive to private development. For this reason Century Boulevard is seen as a crucial element for unlocking the value of adjacent land.

