

# Appendix 1: Thorndon

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## 1.1 Significance of Thorndon to the City

Thorndon's distinctive character is an important part of Wellington's collective identity. Thorndon has city wide significance, a unique atmosphere and a strong sense of place based on:

- **Historical continuity**

Being the first settlement area in Wellington, with a high proportion of original buildings remaining, Thorndon is a reminder of inner city residential housing constructed prior to and around the turn of the 20th century. Thorndon conveys a strong sense of history, that adds to the city's collective memory.



*Intricate roofscape*

- **Heritage significance**

Compared to other parts of the city, the concentration of old buildings in Thorndon is very high, although there are also a significant number of more recent developments. Despite the effect of this more recent development, Thorndon gains its character from the large number of Victorian and Edwardian villas and cottages.

- **Distinctive physical image**

Thorndon is based around the street grid aligned with Tinakori Road and a second grid aligned with Hobson Street. Thorndon has a particularly distinctive pattern of high density urban fabric of original dwellings consistently aligned with the geometry of the underlying street grid and integrated by a strong sense of aesthetic coherence.



*Strong sense of aesthetic coherence*

## 1.2 Character Overview

Thorndon as a whole is characterised by variation of character. While parts of Thorndon exhibit consistency of building type, form and detail, others are characterised by a wider range of forms and styles.

The area to the west of Tinakori Road, north of Harriet Street and extending as far as Cottleville Terrace is notable for its visual consistency. This is due to a concentration of large numbers of buildings of similar type, form and scale.

The remaining parts of Thorndon are more diverse in character, and are not comparable with Tinakori Road North in their visual consistency. Nevertheless there are groupings of buildings of consistent type, form and character found in various locations.

The character of Thorndon is determined by the following common patterns:

### **Building type**

*Predominance of villas and cottages.* The predominant building type is the villa, ranging from the “grand villa” down in size to the narrow (one room wide) two storey villa and the broader (two room wide) one storey villa. Villas are found throughout Thorndon, but the greatest concentration occurs around the north end of Tinakori Road and along Hobson Street.

The cottage is another recurring building type, which is found primarily on the slopes rising behind the south end of the Tinakori Road shops, and in the lanes around Calgarry Avenue.

Multi-unit developments are interspersed throughout Thorndon. Typically these developments are taller than the neighbouring buildings and larger in plan area, particularly where the plan configuration has not been related to the characteristic scale of the adjacent detached houses.

## **Building size**

The most common building height is two storeys although there are concentrations of single storey dwellings in areas such as Calgarry Avenue and surrounds.

The pattern is that width relates to the module of a single dwelling. However, the size of this module varies throughout Thorndon. The grand villas of Hobson Street and fronting the north end of Tinakori Road are both wider than the typical cottage, which dependent on orientation, can present either a wide or narrow frontage to the street.

## **Landform and character**

### *Flat areas are characterised by consistency*

The pattern of development within Thorndon changes in association with topography. The generally flat and relatively gently sloped areas are characterised by groups of relatively uniform sized and shaped lots and general uniformity of building type and scale. Here the dominant view is of relatively uniform street walls and a generally homogenous roofscape.

### *Sloping areas are relatively complex*

By contrast, the more steeply sloped areas south of Harriet Street, contain a wide range of very large and very small sites, generally rectilinear but with a considerable variation in plan proportions. The dominant view from a distance is of a variable arrangement of buildings on the hillside, with planting between the buildings, and a highly complex and intricate roofscape as seen from the street.

## **Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street**

Street edges within Thorndon are generally strongly defined by building frontages. Buildings within the area are aligned with the orthogonal geometry established by the street grid.

Frontage setbacks vary from place to place. However, there is a strong pattern of consistent setbacks along certain streets and parts of streets. This consistency occurs particularly in the area to the west of Tinakori Road and north of Harriet Street. There is significant diversity of setbacks in the area to the west of Tinakori Road and south of Harriet Street.

Trees typically play a secondary role in defining the street edge. The exception of this pattern is found in the steeply sloping areas, at the south end of Thorndon, characterised by large trees or significant areas of vegetation, and also around the grand villas which are typically set in larger lots allowing for trees in their front and side yards.

Very narrow front yards with private gardens, often associated with low picket fences are a frequent feature adding significantly to their visual quality of the streetscape.

Buildings are uniformly and strongly aligned to the street edge

and grid.

### **Side and rear yards**

Most parts of Thorndon are characterised by a pattern of narrow side yards.

Larger side yards are typically found around the “grand villas” along Hobson Street and the north end of Tinakori Road. Some of the more generous side yards have become driveways accessing rear gardens and rear lot development. All but the most recent examples retain extensive planting.

The predominant site coverage in Thorndon is around 35%.

Most properties have minimal rear yards. Most common dimension for a rear yard for Thorndon is 7.0 m.

### **Vehicle access and parking**

Parking at street edges is common and in many cases located and landscaped in a way that does not compromise the definition or the visual quality of the street.

Parking across the full width of frontages along parts of Tinakori Road has broken down the pre-existing pattern of front gardens and definition of the footpath edge. This is not a desirable pattern.

### **Building form**

The villa type is characterised by single primary form, few secondary forms and additive tertiary forms such as verandahs, porches or lean-tos.

*There is a mix of roof types throughout the area*

These include hipped (most typical for villas), gabled (typical for cottages), and complex gabled associated with the “grand villas”. Most roofs have moderate pitch. Flat roofs are not typical for the area. Parts of Thorndon are characterised by relatively consistent roof types and pitches.

### **Façade treatment**

Buildings display a strong street orientation with gables, bays and entries facing the street.

Most of the single storey dwellings are simple in form and modestly articulated with eaves and brackets typical of the period of their construction.

Typically villas present a single front façade towards the street. Their rear facades typically have smaller, less ornate openings.

## **Materials**

### *Limited palette of materials*

Thorndon as a whole exhibits a limited range of materials characteristic of the era of construction of most buildings.

Rusticated weatherboards and corrugated iron are the predominant materials for walls and roofing respectively. Most buildings have light coloured walls. Materials typical for contemporary suburban development, for example, naturally weathered timber and brick are uncommon.

### **Frontage landscaping and fencing**

Narrow front yards with private gardens, often associated with low picket fences, are important elements of the streetscape. Street frontages are dominated by building fronts with trees playing secondary role.

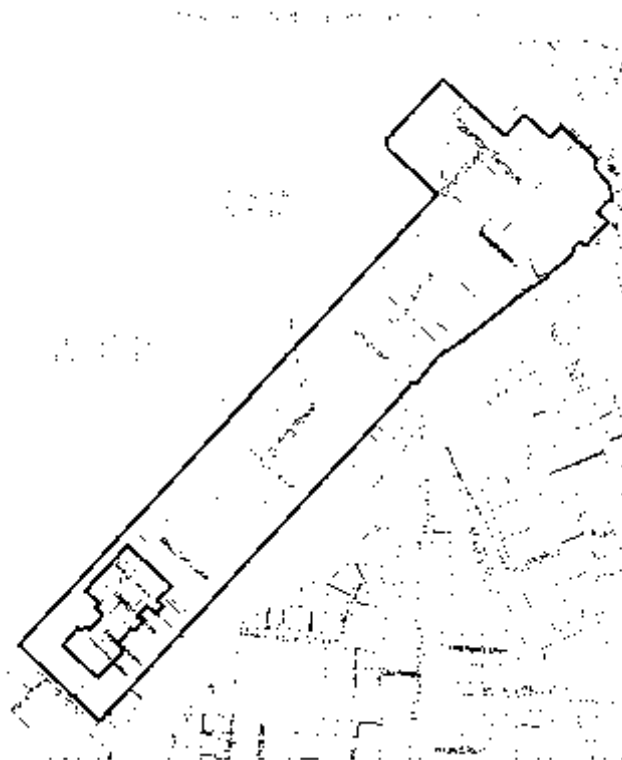
## 1.3 Variation of Local Character: Areas Within Thorndon

Thorndon can be separated into identifiable areas with appreciable variation of local character. When considering the collective character of Thorndon it is important that these local differences are recognised.

Apart from the Thorndon Character Area, centred around Glenbervie Terrace and described in the Thorndon Character Area Design Guide, these areas include:

- 1) Tinakori Road North, with Calgarry Avenue and surrounds
- 2) Tinakori Road South
- 3) Tinakori Road east of the Motorway with two major parts centred around:
  - Hobson Street
  - Portland Crescent and Selwyn Terrace.

### Tinakori Road North/Calgarry Avenue and Surrounds



*Clearly defined front elevations*



*The northern end of Tinakori Road is characterised by large dwellings*

This area stretching from Harriet Street north to Stowe Hill, bounded by the Town Belt to the west and the Motorway to the east is characterised by:

- Visual consistency, due to a significant concentration of buildings of a unified type, form and scale. The aesthetic coherence is broken only by a small number of apartment blocks at the margins of the area, and a commercial/industrial area near its centre.
- Large numbers of late Victorian and Edwardian villas that form a strong street wall to the edge of Tinakori Road.
- Hipped roof villas along the street edge of Tinakori Road with a notable concentration of larger buildings including grand two storey villas and large Arts and Crafts style houses at its northern end.
- Predominance of two storey hipped roof villas along Goring Street, where the similarities of building form are supported by a consistency of detail.
- Calgarry Avenue and immediate surroundings (refer map) is an area of particularly distinctive and unified character, based upon single storey original pre-1920s dwellings. This area is an almost complete collection of workers' cottages, and provides a physical reminder of the historical pattern of development in Wellington. The area is unusual and unique to Wellington in general, and in the inner city residential areas in particular for the:
  - narrow street width and the prevalence of the "lane" as means of access to the dwellings
  - overwhelming predominance of single storey dwellings
  - unusual consistency of roof form and siting, building type and style, materials and detail within each street, with the hipped roof single storey villa being the signature building in Calgarry Avenue
  - significant numbers of very old buildings.



*The hipped roof villa is the predominant building type along Goring Street*

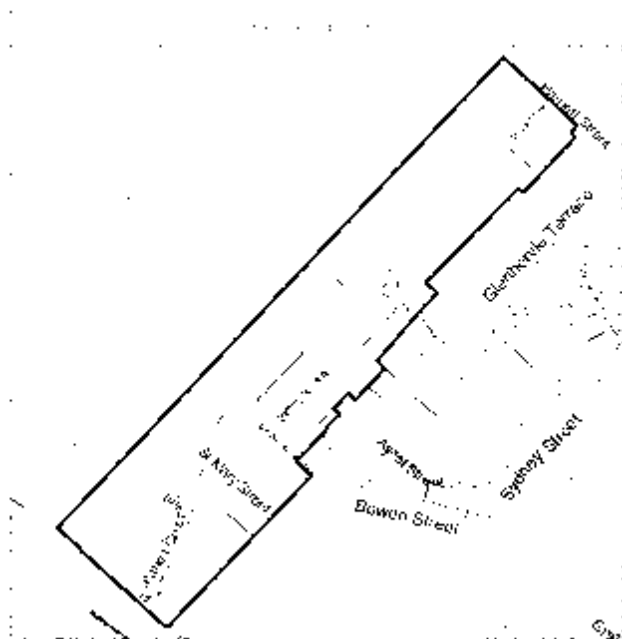


*Narrow street width*



*Single story dwellings built prior to 1920*

## Tinakori Road South



*Original pre 1920's dwelling*

This area extends south from Harriet Street as far as Patanga Crescent. It is bordered by the Town Belt to the west, and Thorndon Character Area to the east. In general the building character within Tinakori Road South relates to the building character in the Thorndon Character Area. The dominant distant view of this more steeply sloped area is of a highly variable arrangement of buildings on the hillside with planting visible between the buildings.

Tinakori Road South is characterised by:

- Generally rectilinear but highly variable lot sizes and shapes, with many small lots and back sections.
- Diversity of building types, plan shapes, forms and sizes, frontage setbacks, styles and materials.
- Dispersed small groupings of buildings of consistent character interspersed with a wide range of various other buildings (including taller apartment blocks).
- An intricacy of roofscape derived from a rising topography, and a mix of one and two storey dwellings, many with steeply pitched roofs and many small primary roof forms.
- The presence of a number of pre-1900 and pre-1920's dwellings.



*Dispersed groupings of consistent type form and character*



*Diversity of building types and forms*



## Thorndon - east of the Motorway



Thorndon east of the Motorway consists of two identifiable areas of residential buildings. The larger area is centred on Hobson Street. The smaller area is the enclaves of Portland Crescent and Selwyn Terrace.

### Hobson Street and surrounds

- Focused along Hobson Street, this residential area is characterised by a large number of “grand villas” from the Victorian era mixed with more recent multi-unit development. Other building types include some non-residential buildings such as embassies, schools and an ambulance station.
- The residential buildings in the area are characterised by similarity of both scale and type. Another common feature is their grand scale. Otherwise, many of the dwellings exhibit singular layouts and styles. Individual designs contribute to a variety of forms, materials, details and decorative treatments. As a result the buildings on Hobson Street tend towards architectural individuality both in their form and detail.
- Front and side yards around the grand villas are typically large allowing for trees or significant areas of vegetation.



*Residential building of “grand scale” are typical in Hobson Street*



*Variety of forms and details*



*Portland Terrace – notable concentration of two story villas*

## Portland Crescent and Selwyn Terrace



*Portland Crescent – clearly defined front elevations with bay windows, entries and verandahs facing the street.*

- Portland Crescent is notable as a small residential enclave within a commercial area. As a concentration of original dwellings, Portland Crescent is a reminder of the type of housing that once spread over this area.
- Portland Crescent is characterised by a general consistency of building age, type and scale, with the two storey villa being the predominant type.
- Like Portland Crescent, Selwyn Terrace is a vestige of the residential fabric of this area prior to extensive non-residential development. This street however, is characterised by steeper topography and a greater diversity of building types.



*Western side of Portland Crescent – larger set backs and garages built to the street boundary*