

# Appendix 6: Residential Coastal Edge

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## 6.1 Significance of the Residential Coastal Edge to the City

The Residential Coastal Edge has a special character that contributes to Wellington City’s sense of place and provides an important visual amenity to local residents and the public.

The parts of Owhiro Bay, Island Bay, Houghton Bay, Lyall Bay, Moa Point, Breaker Bay, Worser Bay, Karaka Bay and Evans Bay that make up the Residential Coastal Edge Area are not typical of a suburban streetscape. The built elements are compressed to a ribbon between vegetated escarpments and the coastal edge with the line of the road running between.

The coastal edge also has important recreational as well as tourism value to Wellington with the drive/walk or cycle along the linear coastal edge, a quality experience that derives from the combination of the built and natural character. There is accordingly a very public, as well as ‘intense’, relationship between the natural and the built elements.

It is important to ensure that new development along the Residential Coastal Edge is of high design quality and enhances the area’s collective character, amenity value and public significance. The intent of this Design Guide is to ensure new development achieves these objectives.

### *Public or Private Environment?*

The Residential Coastal Edge is a highly valued residential area with strong amenity value. The area is also an important recreational destination. The steep escarpment behind the dwellings further defines the Residential Coastal Edge by pushing the buildings to the street edge thus increasing the sense of interaction between the public and private dimensions of the area.



*Strong relationship between the natural and built environment*



### *Sense of Place*

The contrast between the built elements that are compressed to a ribbon between vegetated escarpments and the openness of the coast gives the area a special character that contributes to Wellington city’s sense of place and its collective identity.

### *Diversity*

The Residential Coastal Edge is characterised by a few groupings of buildings of consistent styles, but generally wide variations in age, style, materials and form. This creates a visual diversity and interest which is further accentuated by the strong landscape element of the vegetated escarpment and the strongly defined building edge.

## 6.2 Character Overview

The vegetated escarpments along the Residential Coastal Edge compress development to a narrow strip of housing, giving the setting a visual prominence and intensity that makes it more sensitive to change than a typical suburban streetscape.

### **Building type**

#### *Overall diversity in form, type and style*

The Residential Coastal Edge has a diverse building character with no pronounced consistency of building form, type or architectural style. Buildings range from typically single storey bach style cottages or bungalows, to Victorian villas, to contemporary modern houses that are generally on two (or more) levels.

#### *Groups of consistent styles*

While most of the coastal edge has a diversity and visual complexity of residential styles and materials, there are two recognisable groupings of buildings with consistent styles - one at Karaka Bay and the other at Island Bay. These groupings were all built pre-1910. Some are villas of relatively consistent style and form.

#### *Baches*

There are also a number of individual ‘remnant’ baches from when the coastal edge would have attracted weekend use or possibly would have been used by fishermen. The only consistency of these buildings is perhaps their age and modest nature, but their materials, form and styles are variable.



*Overall diversity in form, type and style*



Small groupings of consistent styles

## Building size

### *Consistent height*

The generally consistent heights of one or two storeys (only a few are taller) above street level along the Residential Coastal Edge generates a clear line in perspective and also serves to accentuate the linear coastal edge and define the escarpment above.



*The area is a mixture of one and two storey dwellings*

## Landform and character

### *Building on the flat*

The steepness of the escarpment and closeness of the coastal edge has limited development to a single ribbon strip of generally two storey buildings following the coastal road. Viewed at a distance this presents a strong linear pattern of development at the base of the escarpment.

### *Escarpment*

The escarpment presents an important landscape element and open space framework. The vegetation on the escarpment provides a distinctive ‘green’ character to this coastal edge.

The steep topography around the Residential Coastal Edge has meant that in most cases the escarpment is still generally intact and undeveloped. This has given it a visual prominence and intensity that makes it more sensitive to changes in character than a typical suburban streetscape. Development that altered this escarpment (through increased building heights or development within the escarpment) would negatively impact on this character.



*Strong relationship between the built environment and the escarpment*

## Intensity of development

### *Perception of density*

Buildings are generally limited to the flat area of each site in front of the escarpment. This reinforces the effect of concentration and intensity along the street edge.



*A strongly defined street edge gives the perception of density.*

## Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street

### *Strong edge definition and building alignment*

Buildings align and face to the road with their narrow side. Most of the residential buildings present an active frontage providing an interaction opportunity between residents and public life (e.g. walking, running, cycling, traffic) on the road or beyond (e.g. the beach or in the water). This ‘activeness’ is enabled by (often large) windows, entrances, decks, balconies and their attendant living spaces that are orientated toward the road and the coastline.

Where there is no setback, the visual connection between the inhabitants and the public life of the coastal road is further intensified.



*Strong edge definition*

## Side and rear yards

### *Minimal side yards*

The small separation distances between buildings accentuates the definition of the building edge by providing a continuous front which is distinctive in perspective close up, but also when viewed at a distance.

## Vehicle access and parking

### *On-site garaging*

Car parking is typically in garages and generally integrated with the building on the ground floor of the residence or provided for at the back of a building. Accessory buildings in front of dwellings are generally discouraged.



*Car parking is typically under or at the back of dwellings*

## Building Form

### *Fine grain*

The generally narrow frontages and residential type details present a fine ‘grain’ and steady rhythm along the edge which is at a comfortable human scale.

### *Mix of roof forms*

The Residential Coastal Edge is characterised by a mix of roof types including skillion, curved and papapet/flat, gable and hip roofs.



*Mixture of roof forms*

## Façade treatment

### *Diversity and visual complexity*

Although there is a diverse range of building types there is a commonality of design features throughout the area such as (often large) windows, entrances, decks, balconies and their attendant living spaces that are orientated toward the road.



*Buildings are generally orientated towards the road*

## Materials

### *Diversity of cladding materials*

The buildings along the Residential Coastal edge use a variety of external materials. These include fibre-cement sheeting, plastered or fair-faced masonry, painted and unfinished weathered-grey weatherboards and metal cladding.

Roofs are predominantly profiled metal sheeting, although some are tiled.

## Frontage landscaping and fencing

### *Very shallow or no front gardens*

There is minimal setback from the front boundary for buildings on most of the coastal edge creating a strongly defined building edge to the road.

Where there is a setback, most properties have front fences which continue the line of the road edge. These are generally at a height that still enables a visual connection between the residents and the public.



*The minimal setbacks have lead to very shallow or no front gardens*

## 6.3 Objectives

- (1) Maintain and enhance the relationship between the built and natural environment in particular the relationship between the escarpment, the buildings, the road and the coast.
- (2) To reinforce the character of the street frontage by encouraging active building frontages, fine grain and a defined building edge.
- (3) Encourage the retention of vegetation on the escarpment.
- (4) Discourage new buildings and structures on prominent escarpment faces.