

ASSESSMENT RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The assessment criteria and policies of the District Plan require consideration of the multi-unit proposal against the guidelines in the Residential Design Guide. The matters that are of relevance under the Guide have been assessed below.

ASSESSMENT

1. CHARACTER

01.1 To recognise the unique qualities and sense of place of every urban setting, and respond to and enhance these with new development.

01.2 To minimise visual effects of earthworks on the public realm

1.1. Assessing and complementing neighbourhood character

G1.1 Identify and relate to the established patterns and precedents that determine the character of the street and local neighbourhood.

The existing neighbourhood character is single and double storey family homes, along with some sites which have begun to be developed as multi-unit developments.

However, the wider Tawa area is undergoing a period of transition as the pressure for new and more intensive housing options in established areas with good transport links is experienced. Along with the changes in policy direction which have been introduced by the NPS-UD, the Draft District Plan, the Adopted Spatial Plan and the recently introduced the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Bill, we consider the character of the street and established patterns are therefore relatively transitional and will be subject to change over the next 12-24 months.

Therefore, while the proposed development will be a departure from the existing character, the use of the site remains residential. This, along with the future policy direction supporting the intensification of use (and the wider benefits of this), we consider the site is a good candidate for development at a higher density and more contemporary but complementary style.

1.2. Consistency or contrast

G1.2 Maintain consistency with defining and valued neighbourhood patterns, staying generally within the limits of diversity in the area and creating contrast only in special circumstances.

The proposed 24 unit development is a contrast, particularly in terms of height from the existing neighbourhood pattern.

This, in line with indications for the future policy direction for this site, therefore is considered the first 'contrast' site in the neighbourhood.

The site offers an increase in density from the existing houses, and a corresponding diversity of housing types and styles which supports the future central and local government policy directions.

1.3. Landform

G1.3 Maintain general landform, minimise the need for large retaining structures and design any required earthworks and retaining walls as positive landscape features.

The existing landform will generally be maintained with the proposed 24 unit development and the buildings are concentrated nearest to the road boundary to avoid the stream bank as much as possible.

Earthworks for the development will be concentrated in the area of the site closest to the road boundary and once completed, the buildings, paving or landscaping will cover most of this area. Landscaping of the area towards the Porirua Stream will complement the existing trees/vegetation on the site.

1.4. Vegetation

G1.4 Retain significant existing trees and vegetation where practicable and where these can be usefully integrated into the residential development, particularly where they are recognised by the local community as having significance beyond the site.

Apart from the area where the driveway, building platforms, decks and paved areas will be located, the remainder of the site will retain its existing open space character. A full landscape plan prepared by Local provides full details of existing and proposed landscaping.

1.5. Height

G1.6 Where height is a significant character issue, relate the height of new development to that of buildings within the immediate area.

Height is not a significant character issue in this location although it is accepted that the proposed development is a departure from the existing building heights in the area. The proposed height is supported by future central and local government policy direction of intensification of use of land in identified areas throughout the City. This site is identified to have increased future height limits.

1.6. Plan dimensions and siting

G1.7 Relate to the existing pattern of building dimensions, frontage widths and spaces between buildings

The siting of the building towards the road boundary on this corner site attempts to maintain a balance between amenity and setbacks for the neighbouring sites whilst allowing for increased height. This is achieved through a balance of increasing density which fulfils future policy direction but maintaining site coverage to 45%, leaving the remaining 55% of the site for open spaces.

In summary, the proposed building respects the existing development in the area however seeks to introduce an increased density of the building which responds to housing demand in this popular and well located area for transport options.

G1.8 Reference established side yard patterns in situations where new buildings can be built to the side boundaries but patterns of side yards remain important.

The location of the building and parking areas towards the road boundary, along with landscaping of the road reserve area, seeks to maximise the setbacks from the northern and eastern boundaries whilst also maximising areas of private ground floor and upper floor open space. We consider a good balance is achieved on the site.

1.7. Frontage setbacks

G1.9 Maintain frontage setbacks that are consistent with the existing pattern of development in the immediate area in situations where this existing pattern is a determining characteristic of the area and is recognised as being of value

Being a corner site, the standard 3m frontage setback in the rules must be balanced with the overall amenity and other outcomes for the site. The proposed development which concentrates the building to the road frontage limits and concentrates the earthworks required to the flatter areas of the site and avoids the areas close to the Porirua Stream

1.8. Wall and frontage orientation

G1.10 Follow the local pattern of orientation of walls relative to street edges and the street grid.

The local pattern of wall orientation and street grid is followed by this multi-unit development. The elevations include site specific and appropriate levels of articulation, detail and openings.

1.9. Silhouette and roof form

G1.11 Where consistent silhouette and roof form is a defining pattern of a neighbourhood, make considered reference to the predominant patterns of roof type and pitch.

The silhouette and roof form are new to the neighbourhood although may be used as a reference for future developments of this nature over time.

1.10. Façade articulation

G1.12 Refer to existing patterns of façade articulation and use of secondary and tertiary forms to achieve a complementary level of visual relief and formal complexity.

The proposed building has been designed to provide both vertical and horizontal elements in the façade articulation which complements the development. The proposed building achieves a complementary mix of articulation and visual relief as appropriate to the site and provides variation of depth and modulation.

1.11. Materials, finishes, textures and colours

G1.13 In situations characterised by consistency of materials, finishes, textures or colours, integrate typical and/or complementary materials into new developments, considering both texture and colour.

The proposed building presents an opportunity to introduce new but complementary materials, finishes, textures and colours to the area, reflective of an area in transition. The proposed building will have long run roofing along with perforated metal balconies and Sculptform rainscreen cladding which will complement the existing dwellings in the surrounding area.

1.12. Adding to an existing building

G1.14 Maintain general consistency of character when adding a new dwelling to an existing structure. This may include consistency of form, alignment, window type and proportions, and overall quality of materials and detail. Contrast is possible, but this requires design skill for successful integration.

Not relevant.

2. SITE PLANNING

O2.1 To plan and locate dwellings and open spaces together as a coherent whole, in a way that complements the character of neighbouring development and optimises amenity and liveability both within the development and for neighbours.

O2.2 To make a positive contribution to the safety, amenity and visual character of the street.

O2.3 To site and design buildings to meet the reasonable requirements of occupants and neighbours for visual and acoustic privacy.

2.1. Comprehensive, integrated site planning

G2.1 Integrate the location and design of buildings and open spaces.

The location and design of the building demonstrates an integration of site planning with the outdoor open spaces for the units. Good quality indoor areas along with outdoor spaces were a consideration in the proposed design. The layout also fits with the shape of the site and topography and seeks to minimise earthworks on the site.

2.2. Positive open spaces

G2.2 Create positive open spaces between and around buildings

G2.3 Aim to assign private open space to individual units wherever possible.

Each unit provides a private open space. Generous ground level open spaces are provided for the ground floor units. These open spaces are private, sunny, sheltered and accessible from the main living, dining and kitchen spaces. The upper floor decks provide the private outdoor open spaces for the remaining units and these add to positive amenity for these units.

G2.4 Provide active edges to any shared areas of open space.

Active edges have been incorporated in the open space on the site which borders the Porirua Stream with ground floor and upper floor decks, along with appropriate landscaping treatments.

2.3. Sunlight and daylight to living areas

G2.5 Position all dwellings to receive midwinter sun in at least one main living room for at least 4 hours at mid-winter.

Sunlight and daylight to the units is maximised by the proposed layout, design and orientation

G2.6 Design elevations on or near common boundaries so that amenity is maintained even if future development on neighbouring sites is maximised at the shared boundary.

The site layout and setbacks achieved, along with open space provision and window placement seeks maintain the amenity on the site and for neighbouring properties, even if development on neighbouring sites is maximised.

G2.7 Locate and model building form to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable shading of private outdoor living spaces or windows to main rooms in adjacent dwellings within the development and in residential buildings on adjacent sites.

Maximising the set backs to the neighbouring properties and the sensitive window heights and orientation of open spaces on all floors of the building result in a sensitive design which is designed which avoid unnecessary and unreasonable shading of outdoor spaces and windows of dwellings on neighbouring sites.

2.4. Car parking, garage and driveway location

G2.8 Avoid concentrating garages at the street frontage and monotonous repetition of garage doors along the street frontage or within any development.

Not relevant.

G2.9 Locate open car parking so that parked cars are not a dominant element at the street edge.

Not relevant. Only limited scooter/motorbike parking is provided along with secure bike parking and a rubbish truck area.

G2.10 Position and design any communal vehicle and pedestrian access ways to avoid intruding on the privacy of dwelling interiors.

The design of all central communal areas of the building avoids intruding on the privacy of the unit interiors.

G2.11 Locate garages to be conveniently reached from their associated dwellings but not where they completely obscure views of either the street or any common open space within the development.

Not relevant. No garaging is proposed.

G2.12 Ensure any open carparking space can be viewed from the dwelling to which it is allocated.

Not relevant.

G2.13 For developments that are likely to be occupied by people with limited mobility, where practical provide either internal garage or an at grade link between parking spaces and their associated unit.

At grade ramps are provided with easy access for the building to enhance access for people with limited mobility.

3. BUILDING DESIGN

- O3.1 *To ensure each building is coherently designed, demonstrates design integrity, and integrates all relevant design criteria in the best possible way.*
- O3.2 *To make a positive contribution to the safety, amenity and visual character of the street.*
- O3.3 *To ensure that the design of new building tops enhances the visual amenity of the area when these are prominent in view.*
- O3.4 *To provide internal living environments that are healthy, comfortable, convenient, functional and attractive for their occupants.*
- O3.5 *To provide reasonable privacy both for the new dwellings and for neighbours.*

3.1. Internal consistency and integration

- G3.1 *Demonstrate in the design and composition of any building an overall coherence that integrates all of the relevant design guide requirements in a coordinated rather than piecemeal way.*

The design of the development achieves a high degree of coherence and meets the guideline.

3.2. Frontages to the street

- G3.2 *Present a public face to the street with entrances and windows orientated towards the street.*

The overall design of the building presents a public face to the street with clearly a defined central entrance to the building along with windows, courtyards at ground level and upper storey decks. This design establishes and achieves a good connection with the street and provides ample opportunity for informal surveillance of the street to take place.

- G3.3 *Avoid using reflective or dark heat absorbing glass on building frontages.*

This has been avoided.

- G3.4 *Where apartments are within suburban centres, establish publicly relevant activity at the ground level street edge.*

Not relevant.

- G3.5 *Ensure developments with wide street frontages provide frequent connections to the street.*

Not relevant. The building and frontage are designed to enhance and maximise the connection of the building to the street whilst ensuring legibility around access points.

3.3. Scale and visual complexity

- G3.6 *Give a sense of human scale at the publicly occupied edges of buildings.*

The publicly occupied spaces along the building frontage provide outdoor seating and meeting spaces along with access steps and a ramp to the building. Careful attention has been given to the building design along the frontage to take opportunities to present a 'normal' human scale.

- G3.7 *Provide visual interest on new façades, articulating or eliminating wall surfaces that are featureless or plain.*

The proposed facades provide a good level of articulation and visual interest on the main elevations.

3.4. *Building tops*

G3.8 Integrate the tops of buildings, including plant and services, as explicit and coherent parts of the overall composition.

The roof treatment is a coherent design response for the site.

3.5. *Space and amenity*

G3.9 Locate and design the living areas of individual residential units to optimise sun exposure, natural lighting and views.

This has been achieved. The ground floor units with outdoor courtyards and decks and the upper floor units with outdoor decks have good access to sun and natural lighting and enjoy views to the street and/or the stream. The location of the living areas for the units is appropriate and optimises sun and natural lighting for the units.

G3.10 Provide shared internal circulation within developments that is efficient, convenient and understandable.

The shared space on the site is efficient, convenient and understandable and includes the central entrance to the site from the frontage, central shared hallways/stairs/lift, the common scooter parking, rubbish collection/storage areas, the bike storage area and the landscaped area along the Porirua Stream bank.

G3.11 Ensure circulation and spaces within dwellings are efficiently planned to optimise amenity and flexibility in the use of space.

This is achieved.

G3.12 Ensure rooms are large enough to accommodate the functions appropriate to their type including storage.

This is achieved.

G3.13 Provide for each dwelling which has private open space at ground, and which is not supplied with a lockable garage, a secure weatherproof storage area or cupboard accessible from the outside with a minimum internal volume of 1m³.

Each ground floor unit has deck or courtyard space for secure private storage space if required.

3.6. *Privacy for internal spaces*

G3.14 Position windows or otherwise restrict or direct outlook so that the short-range view from one dwelling is not directly into the main internal living areas of any neighbouring dwellings both within the development, or on adjacent sites.

The proposed design has been carefully considered to avoid this outcome (i.e. no direct views into neighbouring houses internal spaces).

G3.15 Position windows adjacent to public or communal areas to minimise loss of privacy from passers-by looking in, while still letting people inside look out.

As detailed in the Local landscape plans, appropriate fencing and landscaping along the street frontage will ensure that ground floor units minimise any loss of privacy whilst allowing occupants to maintain an appropriate level of visual connection to the street.

G3.16 Shield the sleeping and noise-sensitive living areas of dwellings from uncontrollable high levels of external noise by distance, planning or constructional means.

Modern insulation requirements required by the Building Act, include double glazed windows and external wall densities that ensure that there is a mitigation of noise levels within sleeping areas to easily comply with this guideline in this situation.

3.7. Entrances and sense of address

G3.17 Provide entry to dwellings that:

- *is visible from the street or readily accessed from common areas within the development;*
- *provides a sheltered area immediately outside the door and a reception space inside the dwelling that is not a main living area;*
- *is not dominated by service spaces and activities; and*
- *allows appropriate personalisation by the occupants of the dwelling.*

The address (“292”) is marked at the centralised main entry point making it easily identifiable. The frontage treatments, landscaping, access steps and access ramp are provided to seamlessly connect the building to the street. The common areas then readily flow on to provide individual access to the units and will appropriately and legibly mark the transition from public to private spaces with design elements which include door marking/numbering.

G3.18 Make main entrances to apartments visible, attractive, safe and well-lit, and place these to provide good physical and visual connections between the street and lobby spaces.

The main central entrance to the building is visible, attractive, safe and well lit with landscaping, outdoor seating and meeting areas, along with steps and a ramp being provided to ensure a good connection between the street and lobby spaces.

G3.19 Consider the modelling of multi-unit building form to achieve a sense of individual identity and address for each dwelling.

Opportunities to explore individual identity and address will be explored as the design moves through the consenting process but will be generally achieved by individual front door markings and the external deck areas where occupiers may choose to personalise their outdoor space/decks with deck furniture, planting and pot plants. Hence this guideline is achieved.

4. OPEN SPACE DESIGN

O4.1 To ensure that the private open space provided is of a high quality that will provide a pleasant outlook, create a pleasant, safe and visually attractive setting for the dwelling and accommodate the reasonable outdoor recreational, service and storage needs of residents.

O4.2 To provide a type and quality of open space that is appropriate to the dwelling type.

O4.3 To provide safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and vehicle access to the dwelling.

O4.4 To ensure the landscape treatment has a positive effect on the streetscape and neighbourhood.

O4.5 To minimise any detrimental effects of vehicle access and parking on the visual quality of the streetscape and neighbourhood environment.

4.1. Private open space

G4.1 Provide a "principal area" directly accessible from a main living area of the dwelling within all ground level private open spaces so these can function as an extension of that living area of the dwelling. The principal area should:

- *be positioned with due regard for prevailing wind directions or be detailed to ensure that the worst effects of wind are eliminated.*
- *be located to receive optimal sun exposure*
- *have minimum dimensions of 4m x 4m- check compliance*
- *be nominally flat with a gradient not greater than 1 in 12*
- *have a degree of visual privacy consistent with privacy guidelines.*

G4.2 Ensure that the required private open space area is directly accessible from a main living room, and that the total area provided is within a single contiguous space.

The main outdoor open space areas for all units is directly accessible from the main living/dining/family areas and is are within a single contiguous space.

G4.3 Locate the 'principal area' of the private open space, or any complying balcony or deck to the north, west or east of the dwelling to ensure that it can receive over a substantial proportion of its surface no fewer than 3 hours of direct sunlight on 21 June between the hours of 9am and 3pm.

Each of the ground floor units provides private open space via a deck or courtyard, whilst the upper floor units provide small but usable decks. All private open spaces have been designed and oriented to maximise sun and outlook to these spaces.

G4.4 Use balconies or roof terraces to meet the private open space requirements for above ground dwellings.

For the units above ground floor (ie: levels 2, 3 and 4) balconies will be used for the private outdoor space. Due to their orientation, these spaces have been designed to maximise sun and outlook and to achieve a visual connection to their surroundings.

G4.5 Shared private open space should have the following characteristics. It will:

- *form the planning focus of the development;*
- *have direct or easy connection to all dwellings served;*
- *be access-controlled by its location, planning and design, and managed so it is available to the residents of the development only;*
- *be sunny and have a view beyond the site; and*
- *be generally flat, but may incorporate changes in level where these are designed to add to the visual and functional amenity of the shared space.*

The shared open spaces on the site are split between those areas of frontage which allow for access to the building, the shared scooter parking, driveway, rubbish collection and cycle storage areas to the north of the site, and the stream bank area to the rear of the building. The stream bank areas provide a visual connection to the stream whilst setbacks and new planting enhances amenity for all of the neighbouring properties.

4.2. Privacy for open spaces

G4.6 Protect the private open spaces of dwellings from being directly overlooked by careful positioning and planning, distance, screening devices or landscaping.

The private open spaces for each unit have been protected from direct overlooking as much as possible by their design and location, along with screening. A full landscape plan by Local has been provided for the site which gives details of hard and soft landscaping which are designed to maintain privacy for the private open spaces of each unit.

G4.7 Plan outdoor living areas and position upper level windows of main living areas so that they do not have a direct short-range view into the private outdoor space of adjacent dwellings. This can be achieved by screening or otherwise restricting direct views from new development into the main private open spaces of nearby dwellings.

As part of the overall design, there are no direct short-range views to neighbouring units nor to the interior of the other units.

G4.8 Provide screening devices where an acceptable level of privacy cannot be achieved by separation and the orientation of windows, buildings and spaces.

We consider there are no particular privacy issues for the neighbouring units and that adequate privacy can be achieved on the site.

4.3. Access way design

G4.9 Offset or otherwise articulate long vehicle access ways to reduce vehicle speeds, and landscape them to make them visually attractive.

G4.10 Plan open parking or vehicle manoeuvring areas to provide for pedestrian access and activity, and an attractive outlook from all dwellings that overlook them.

G4.11 Use paving patterns, materials and/or potentially combinations of material types in association with planting to give visual interest to areas used for parking and vehicle circulation.

No long driveways are proposed as part of the development.

The only vehicle access point is a new driveway at the northern end of the site which will allow for scooter parking, rubbish truck access and access to the secure bike storage area. These areas will be fenced and screened from the units as detailed in the Archaus plans and Local landscape plans.

4.4. Site development and construction

G4.13 Refer to the Code of Practice for Land Development for the technical requirements relating to the length, width, gradient, and other geometrical and constructional features of driveways and parking spaces.

The Code of Practice was a consideration of the design of this development and all parking arrangements are acceptable in terms of AS/NZS 2890.1:2004.

In addition, all utility service connections can be constructed to comply with the relevant standards.

G4.14 Provide lighting as required at night for wayfinding and in situations where personal safety or security is likely to be of primary importance.

The proposed building will include external lighting of the entrance area, which will allow light spill for safety at night and as a deterrent to 'unsavoury elements' of the community who pose a safety risk to the community.

G4.15 Design carports or garages and use materials and finishes so that these are visually compatible with, or of a similar standard to, the development as a whole.

Not relevant.

G4.16 Avoid large retaining walls that are visible from surrounding buildings and public spaces. Where retaining walls are necessary, their visibility, formal composition and visual quality are important.

There are no large retaining walls proposed as part of the development.

G4.17 Ensure front fences and boundary walls enable people in the dwelling to see out to the street.

A full landscape plan by Local along with the Archaus architects plans give details of the fencing/walls for the proposed development. The landscaping and fencing proposed achieve appropriate visibility to the street from the development whilst maintaining privacy for residents.

4.5. Service facilities

G4.18 Provide sufficient, suitably screened outdoor storage space to meet the likely rubbish and recycling storage needs of building users. This may be a bin space associated with each dwelling or a shared bin storage space. This space should be:

- *sufficiently large to store and give access to at least one standard large garbage bin for each dwelling*
- *located or screened so as to be visually unobtrusive and not dominate the main entrance to any dwelling, the building complex or to neighbouring dwellings*
- *positioned and ventilated to avoid significant smell nuisance to any dwelling*
- *conveniently accessible from the dwelling or dwellings served.*

G4.19 Provide space conveniently at the street edge to allow temporary location of rubbish and recycling bins for collection.

G4.20 Provide suitable space for natural or open-air laundry drying, within or accessible from each dwelling, but not within the defined 'principal area'.

The development incorporates a central rubbish storage area and private collection point near the street edge as shown on the Archaus plans. This is located to be accessible for all units in the development.

As with many other modern multi-level multi-unit developments internal space has been provided within the floor plans for integrated washer/driers for each unit.

Residential Design Guide Conclusion

The proposal is a quality development and aimed at the middle area of the market. The units will have a wide appeal to first home buyers and in the rental & investment market.

While the proposed building is a departure from the existing form and character of the surrounding neighbourhood, the area has been identified in the various planning instruments as an area which is suitable for more intensive developments in response to the demand for housing in Tawa and the wider Wellington area.

The site is well located to take advantage of a range of public transport options including the train and bus. The site also has linkages to the motorway which will improve as Transmission Gully works are completed.

The proposed development represent a well-designed proposal that achieves the aims of the design guide and will be an asset to the city.