

Residential Design Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Application

This Guide provides design assessment criteria for developments subject to resource consent. In particular, it applies to a range of development scenarios outlined in the Residential Area Rules, including some small scale infill housing developments (which may or may not include subdivision), multi-unit developments and work involving pre-1930 buildings.

Besides this Guide, other documents such as the Subdivision Design Guide may also be applicable to development. Relevant District Plan rules for the underlying zoning will also apply.

Intention

To facilitate new residential development that is of good design, and responds to its neighbours and local context as well as to the needs of people who live in it.

Infill and multi-unit developments by their nature demand that people are able to live comfortably in close proximity. In the relatively high-density environment of multi-unit housing, special measures are needed to ensure that high quality development is achieved. More specifically this Design Guide aims to:

- encourage responsiveness to the character of each particular site, including consideration of the physical and visual qualities of the street and the immediate area
- ensure that new multi-unit development fits into an existing neighbourhood in a way that maintains reasonable standards of privacy and daylight for residents and neighbours
- encourage the design of new housing to respond to known and typical user needs
- encourage good-quality, cost-effective design
- address all types of housing.
- provide detailed description of character to help implement character guidelines in identified residential areas:
 - Thorndon
 - Mount Victoria
 - Aro Valley
 - Mt Cook, Berhampore and Newtown
 - Oriental Bay
 - Residential Coastal Edge

Detailed design objectives are set out in each section.

Interpretation

Relevance

Good design is site and programme specific, and not all of the design guidelines in this design guide will necessarily apply to every site or development type. However, every guideline that is relevant to the project (bearing in mind site, type and scope) must be considered, and design objectives must be satisfied.

Relevant guidelines can be identified by the designer and confirmed with WCC design reviewers in pre-application meetings.

The District Plan identifies areas where different outcomes will be given different weight. While all relevant guidelines must be considered, responding to existing character will be a priority in the areas identified in the appendices to this guide. However, existing character will be less of a focus in identified 'areas of change' where general amenity will instead be emphasised.

Design flexibility and responsiveness to site

Sometimes, a design objective may be best achieved by means not anticipated in these guidelines. In such situations, it is justifiable to depart from a relevant guideline if it can be demonstrated that an alternative design solution better satisfies the associated design objective.

Prioritisation

Every design proposal is a response to a unique mix of requirements and circumstances. Sometimes, they are in competition. While each development should demonstrably satisfy all applicable objectives, the unique conditions of each location may mean some objectives are more important than others. Priority should be given to satisfying those guidelines that are most critical to the overall intentions of this guide in an optimal way in each unique location. Priorities can be identified by the designer and confirmed with WCC design reviewers in pre-application meetings.

Coherence and integration

The design must respond to the range of relevant guidelines in a coherent and integrated way, and should have its own inherent design integrity and coherence.

Explanation

Throughout this guide, italicised explanatory text provides further assistance on the intended interpretation and application of the guidelines.

Information requirements

Refer to Chapter 3 of the District Plan for a list of information required with each application. This includes a design statement that will describe how the proposal satisfies relevant design guidelines and objectives.

1 Character

New development should generally recognise and complement the visual characteristics of the local neighbourhood and streetscape.

However, the extent to which these guidelines are relevant depends on the recognised significance of character in the area. Where new development is located within a group of buildings of recognised and consistent character, or immediately adjacent to recognised heritage buildings, it should pay special attention to compatibility with the defining characteristics of those buildings.

Complementing existing character is not a factor in designated 'Areas of Change'. Here new buildings will help to establish a new, more intensively urban character. However, while representing a change from the existing condition, all development in these areas should follow the principles of good urban design as described in other parts of this guide, and establish a positive precedent for the other development that will follow.

Objectives

- O1.1 To recognise the unique qualities and sense of place of every urban setting, and respond to and enhance these with new development.
- O1.2 To minimise visual effects of earthworks on the public realm.

Guidelines

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.

Primary characteristics are the most important and typically include:

- landform
- significant vegetation
- height
- plan dimensions and frontage width
- setbacks from street frontage
- wall and frontage orientation

Secondary characteristics, depending on local context may be important, but are generally of lesser significance.

These include:

- silhouette and roof form
- façade articulation (including window and door proportions)
- materials, finishes, textures and colours

The importance of any or all of these characteristics is determined by local context. The four dwellings each side of the site and those across the street should be used as a main reference point, although the extent of

relevant local context will vary from site to site. Where the local context includes an exception to a predominant pattern, in general the exception should not be used as a precedent.

Relationship is achieved by establishing visual links with the context, particularly its primary characteristics. When reference is made to existing characteristics, even though it may be in some abstract form, the result should be clearly seen and understood from the street.

While relationship is important, this does not mean stylistic consistency or replication of the detail of neighbouring buildings. New buildings may relate successfully in a number of ways while also introducing new elements.

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.

When is consistency required?

Consistency is most important when a new development is placed within a valued and recognised ensemble of buildings that have similar character, or where alignment, similarity and coherence is required to maintain the quality and character of the public environment.

Where the area is characterised by consistency and unity, then the design response should aim for similarity. The collective quality of such a group of buildings could be degraded if new development did not visually relate to it in important ways. This does not imply replication, nor that the style of new buildings should match existing. It is often possible for a well-designed building of contemporary form and style to complement an existing area with a few key references, particularly to the primary characteristics of its neighbours.

Conversely, where an area is characterised by diversity, the general limits of that diversity should be identified. This will be the range of design responses and elements that will reinforce a link with the area.

When contrast might be considered

Contrast can create a focus of attention. The extent to which this is appropriate depends on the public significance of the proposed development and its function. It also depends on the heritage or cultural value of the setting.

Where a street or neighbourhood is valued for its complexity and diversity, design solutions that contribute to that diversity and largely remain within its boundaries will maintain those qualities. Such places are usually more able to accept diverse forms and contrasting building types. Particularly in areas characterised by diverse character and complexity, new building types, for example apartments, may be appropriate.

Where existing building forms are diverse and divergent elements or buildings compromise the amenity or the visual character of the area, the precedent set by divergent elements should not be followed.

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.

Development should fit into rather than drastically alter the landform. The siting and design of building should be determined by existing landscape features and existing landforms rather than the ability to engineer the site. Landform modification also removes existing vegetation, which can cause further change to character.

Large, utilitarian retaining walls are unsightly, and can be prominent in views across a neighbourhood, particularly where these replace areas of dense

planting. They also impact on the outlook from the dwelling they serve. These elements should be designed to detract neither from the amenity of the dwellings, nor the character of the neighbourhood. Unsightly earthworks and large retaining walls that are highly visible from neighbouring sites or unable to be mitigated with planting and landscaping should be avoided.

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.

Retention of vegetation is particularly important on coastal and other escarpments, and other similar areas that are prominent in public view.

Retaining mature vegetation helps to maintain local character and integrate development into the neighbourhood, but also provides attractive outlook, can help provide visual privacy both within the development and for neighbours and gives a sense of the development being well-established.

Strong patterns of planting along frontages contribute to streetscape character and may also be relevant.

- G1.5 Use species that extend the planting and landscape patterns that characterise the wider setting.

This is relevant where a new development is in an area that comprises a consistent range of species, and the area to be planted is visually prominent, for example a bank or escarpment. Continued use of those species with new planting will help integrate new development into the neighbourhood.

Height

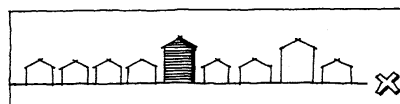
- G1.6 Where height is a significant character issue, relate the height of new development to that of buildings within the immediate area.

Permitted heights are set by District Plan standards, however where a site is within an area characterised by a consistent and much lower height, height at the street frontage may need to be reduced to maintain the existing pattern.

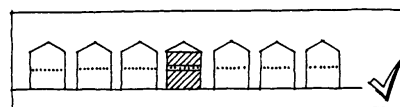
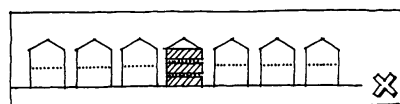
Relationship and transition might be achieved by placing lower transitional forms at the interface or modelling primary form to reduce visual bulk. Height juxtapositions of more than one storey at any street edge where consistency of height currently exists should particularly be avoided.

Where height is relevant to local character, excavation that will increase the perception of building height at the street frontage should be avoided.

In addition making the inter-storey height of new buildings generally similar to that of adjacent dwellings will help to maintain alignments and



Maintaining similar height at the street edge in areas characterised by consistent height



Inter-storey height and relation to character

similarity in size and proportions of wall openings as well as existing scale in situations where this is important.

Plan dimensions and siting

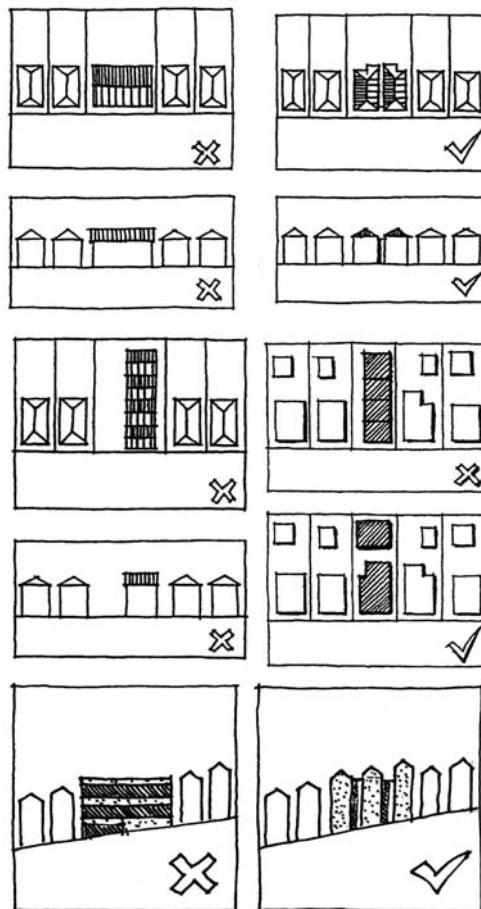
G1.7 Relate to the existing pattern of building dimensions, frontage widths and spaces between buildings by considering, where applicable, the following design techniques:

- Grouping units together into modules that relate to the dimensions of buildings typical for the neighbourhood;
- Expressing the form of each unit, or groups of units (whichever is more consistent with the predominant dimensions of buildings in the immediate area) with a separate roof, and/or differentiating individual units or groups of units by varying colour and materials;
- Offsetting units in plan, introducing gaps or creating slots between blocks with dimensions that relate closely to those existing to give visual separation between dwellings;
- Offsetting units vertically, introducing height variation to articulate building bulk;
- Using transitional forms and volumes to achieve a relationship between a large new development and smaller neighbours.

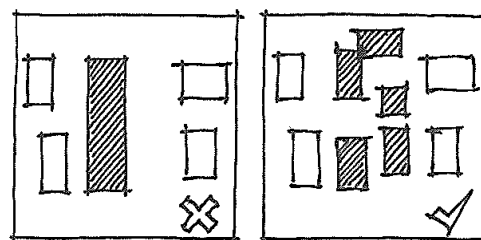
Variation in alignment and form, or both as required, can be used to achieve a scale relationship between relatively large multi-unit development and neighbouring small scale detached dwellings.

Large multi-unit residential developments can become visually dominant if they are of a type and size that contrasts significantly with an existing pattern of detached dwellings in a residential area. Strict alignment of connected identical dwellings means that a group of individual dwellings will usually read as a single, very large building. This is detrimental in areas characterised by relatively small scale detached dwellings.

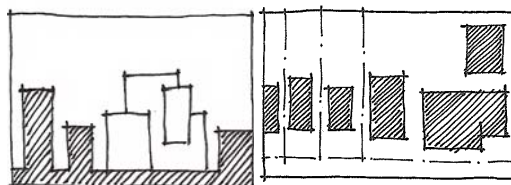
Gaps break down bulk and allow scale relation with smaller neighbouring buildings, and also can allow glimpse views through for neighbours. Spacing between primary forms should relate to typical local patterns. Transitional volumes of intermediate scale can mediate at the interface between smaller or larger developments on neighbouring sites.



Maintaining the rhythm of buildings along the street edge in areas of consistent character



Modulation of plan form to achieve relationship with neighbouring buildings



Use of transitional volumes and placement to achieve a positive scale relationship and assist with integration

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.

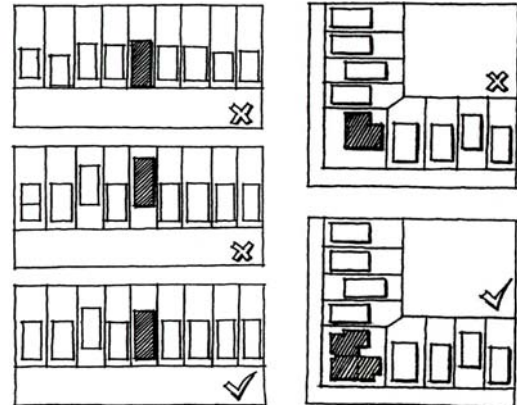
A visual reference to established side yard patterns can be made with form and façade articulation (especially for developments on amalgamated sites). For taller multi-storey

developments, a shallow setback from the side boundaries (introduced at a certain height level) might be appropriate to assist the relationship with adjacent buildings.

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.

The position of buildings relative to the street defines the spatial enclosure or openness of the street and the character of the street edge. The existing pattern or norm should be established and new development is required to be generally consistent with this to maintain the character of the streetscape. Transitions can sometimes be used at and close to boundaries to integrate a new pattern of building placement into an existing neighbourhood.

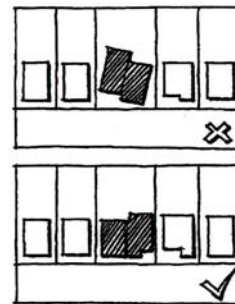


Frontage setbacks

Wall and frontage orientation

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

This relates to primary wall alignments. The alignments of secondary forms, and those not prominent in view are of lesser concern.



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.

Roofscapes should both reflect the character of the area and enhance its visual amenity when viewed from the street. This is particularly important for roofs over the largest components and the most visible parts of development.

Building tops of large new development on amalgamated sites should be carefully modelled to mitigate the effect of a long horizontal unbroken roof line. This can be achieved by breaking down the building top into smaller elements differentiated by height variation, physical breaks, setback/recesses and architectural features. Similar levels of skyline intricacy in combination with reference to predominant roof pitches and types may also help integrate a new development.

Roof forms should be considered in association with predominant roof materials and combinations of roof type, pitch and materials that are uncharacteristic of the area avoided.

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.

This means comparable levels of visual complexity and intensity and quality of detail, and entrances and windows that relate in scale, proportion and percentage of wall surface to local patterns. It does not mean replication of existing styles.

In addition, the scale and proportions of balconies and any balcony encroachments over the public footpath should relate to the scale and proportions of both the building façade and adjacent building frontages.

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.

Apply uncharacteristic materials only in combination with typical materials, ensuring that they are secondary to - and emphasise the visual impact of - the typical. Such materials might be used where they provide a significant improvement in building performance that cannot be achieved in any other way.

Limit or avoid the use of highly reflective cladding materials they would be out of keeping and also where they would create glare conditions in neighbouring streets and public spaces.

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.

The emphasis should be on the new elements fitting in, rather than an arbitrary contrast just for contrast's sake. This does not mean that period details or "reproduction heritage" should be applied as these can, and often do, detract from the character and value of place. Instead a similar level of visual quality, and common materials, forms, proportions and alignments may be used.

A new building may be contemporary in style, but if it is to be in keeping with the existing, it should relate in significant ways to that building.

2 Site Planning

The integrated and comprehensive planning of buildings, access and open spaces together is fundamental to achieving high quality residential development. Placement of building forms in relation to other buildings creates open spaces and establishes conditions of sunlight, daylight and privacy as well as a relationship to neighbourhood character. Good site planning recognises a concern for occupation, considering how a place is used by its occupants as well as its relation to the wider urban context.

Objectives

- 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.

Guidelines

Comprehensive, integrated site planning

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

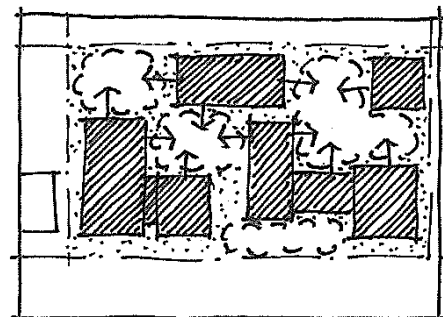
Dwellings must be sited and massed to both provide good quality interior space and define planned, positive open spaces.

Positive open spaces

- G2.2 Create positive open spaces between and around buildings

Open space on site should be planned and positive rather than left-over, function as an outdoor living room, and where relevant, maintain valued local patterns of open space and planting. Positive open space will be placed to relate to the living areas of the dwelling, receive sun, allow daylight to dwellings and a reasonable outlook from habitable rooms. While the edges of spaces may be defined, at least one view to the outside world will ensure that it will not have an unreasonable sense of enclosure.

Planned, positive open spaces between and around buildings will also, by creating visual separation, break down large scale developments and help these to relate to the often smaller scale of neighbours. Well-designed vehicle circulation will also maximise opportunities for creating good quality ground level open space.



Positive open spaces between buildings

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

Private open space assigned to and directly connected to the living areas of dwellings generally enhances its amenity. Under the control of the occupant, it provides for private outdoor living, storage and other uses.

Apartment living may require relaxation or flexibility in the provision of outdoor open space.

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

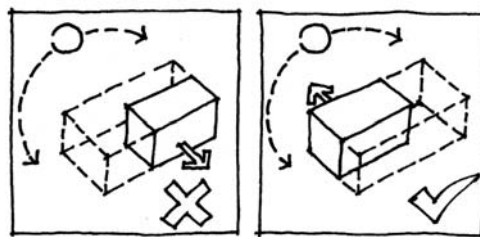
This can be by locating habitable rooms as well as windows and entrances to the dwellings off these spaces, and positioning and orientating garages and garage doors so that they do not dominate the shared access and open spaces associated with groups of dwellings. A balanced approach that also provides reasonable privacy for dwellings is anticipated.

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.

This will require that living areas will generally be located on the north side of dwellings or otherwise designed to optimise sun exposure and natural lighting.

Sunlight access must be considered for reasons of amenity and energy efficiency. In addition to complying with rules for sunlight access for neighbours, sunlight access within the development is also an important consideration.



Locate living areas to receive sun

- 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 amenity of apartments should be future-proofed in anticipation of ongoing intensification.

- 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.

Care should be taken to balance the effects of screens located for visual privacy and the sunlight access that they may block.

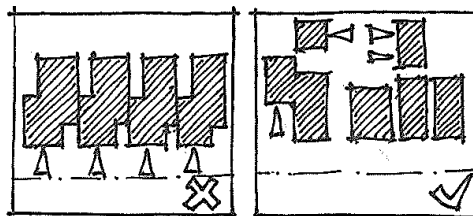
Car parking, garage and driveway location

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

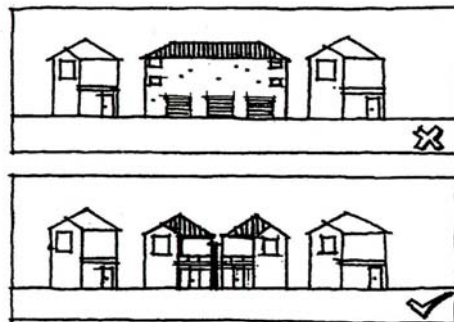
Garages and garage doors should be sited behind dwellings, recessed behind the front building line or otherwise integrated in a way that does not dominate either the street frontage or interior. Such domination is generally avoided when not more than half the ground level frontage width comprises garage doors.

Common open space associated with multi-unit development will be of poor quality and present a

relatively unattractive entrance to the dwellings served if it is dominated by rows of garage doors. This effect may be avoided by a range of methods including breaking large numbers of garages into small groups, varying their alignment and orientation, and interspersing garages at ground level with habitable rooms, dwelling entrances and landscape features.



Avoiding monotony and edges dominated by garage doors



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

On-site parking should generally be placed away from the street frontage, and where the existing pattern of building setbacks and frontage alignment is important, consistency of setbacks should not be compromised to provide vehicle parking at frontages.

Where frontage setback allows for carparking, develop surfaces and landscaping so that any parked car does not dominate the street edge, retaining an appearance of “front garden” rather than “parking space”.

In some circumstances screening or planting and other landscape elements can give the appearance of a garden or courtyard and may mitigate views of parked cars at the frontage. However large blank walls at the street edge associated with car parking should also be avoided.

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

Common accessways or carparking not associated with a dwelling must be set back at least 1.5m from the windows of the main habitable areas of that dwelling, unless the floor level of the dwelling is 0.9m or more above the paved surface.

- 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.

Multiple garages between the dwelling and the street can cut off all signs of the presence of people and activity from the street, create visual monotony, and prevent the safety and security benefits of informal surveillance from being achieved.

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

3 Building Design

The liveability of the dwelling as well as its relationship to the street and wider neighbourhood is determined by its detailed design. Careful placement of interior spaces along with consideration of the location, orientation and type of openings will allow new development to function well and sit well with its neighbours.

Objectives

- 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.

Guidelines

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.

Design coherence comes from the consistency and cohesion that are provided by a definable integrating design concept. Integration requires that the planning, formal composition, and visual qualities of a building are considered as a whole, as well as separately.

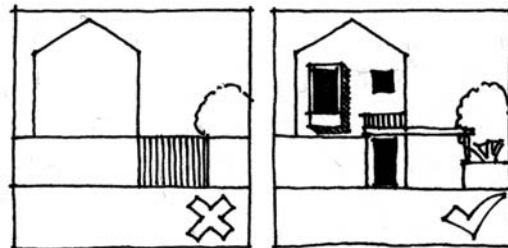
Frontages to the street

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

All development should contribute to the visual appeal and quality of experience of the street. This means where a dwelling is next to a street or other public space, provide living areas within the dwelling with a window facing, and a view out over, that public space.

Windows should be placed to give a good visual connection with the street. Such placement, giving a view out over the street, allows natural surveillance and projects the presence of life onto the street, making it a safer and more attractive place to be.

Where there is little or no established building



Public face to the street

pattern, buildings should introduce sound design precedents for future street frontages.

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

Obscure glazing precludes the visual connection central to a positive street frontage. External awnings and sun screens could be considered as an alternative where environmental control is required.

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

Active edges are particularly important along intensively used streets to maintain the continuity of activity and vitality necessary for the success of those streets.

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

Should a development occupy a long street frontage it is desirable that there be more than one entrance from the street. Long, blank and inactive walls should be avoided.

With apartment development, this might be achieved with some of those apartments having direct access from the street, and/or providing more than one entrance and vertical access core. Multiple entrances will enhance the level of activity at the street edge, and reduce the need for long internal corridors

Scale and visual complexity

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

This can be achieved by various means including openings with proportions and/or dimensions that are similar to those of the human figure; textures and subdivision of elements that are of commonly understood dimensions; and elements and components that are sized for human occupation and use.

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

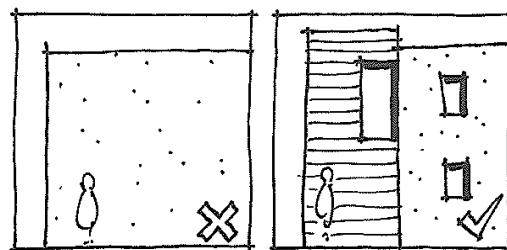
This is particularly important at the street edge or where a facade is conspicuously larger, higher or more prominent in view than others around.

Visual interest may be achieved in a number of ways including:

- *three-dimensional modelling to create contrast between foreground and background elements,*
- *layering architectural elements;*
- *use of contrasting surface finishes, colours or patterns, or by*
- *emphasising part of a building's frontage to create a visual hierarchy.*

The effect should be both coherent and provide a level of visual complexity that is generally consistent with the established visual character of the immediate area.

However, a large flat wall surface may be used to balance other more complex parts of a façade. It may provide contrast and visual relief or a scale



Avoid blank walls at the street edge

relation to an adjacent building. A flat wall surface might constitute a small proportion of ground floor facades, but only if the quality of the street edge is not compromised as a result.

Building tops

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

Solar panels, aerials and other services including any lift machine rooms/over-runs associated with multi-storey development should not be visually obtrusive. They should be integrated into the building top.

Space and amenity

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

All habitable rooms should be designed to receive natural lighting.

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

Routes should be direct and clear, with features that help people to orientate themselves. Ideally they will be short, and overly long corridors should be avoided. Widening to create small lobbies and denote apartment entrances will assist orientation and enhance the sense of spaciousness. Windows providing daylight and ventilation to circulation also provide a glimpse view of the outside to further assist orientation. Awkward or convoluted circulation routes should be avoided.

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

It is crucial, particularly with small dwellings that circulation is efficient and that internal space is functional and can accommodate the reasonably anticipated lifestyle requirements of occupants. Circulation should be simple and direct, and is often effectively incorporated into living areas, although generally there should be some internal screening at the entry to a dwelling. Efficient planning will eliminate unnecessary doors and circulation, and ensure that door swings minimise obstructions within rooms.

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

Rooms should be large enough for furniture and circulation through or around this. Space allowance should be made for the storage appropriate to each type of room, either built in storage or furniture.

- 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.

Bicycle storage should also be considered for all

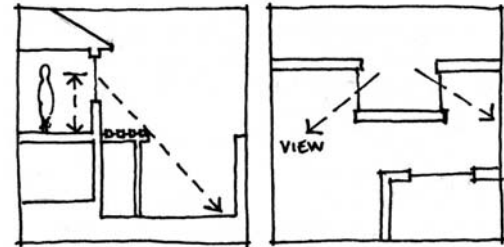
dwelling types, either associated with the dwelling or in a shared secure area.

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.

Many areas in a house require privacy, and this should be able to be achieved by considering privacy issues at the site planning stage and by the careful design and placement of windows. Such measures to achieve privacy need not unduly affect the outlook or daylight to the dwelling, and may avoid the need for residents to resort to screening devices such as blinds or curtains.

While total privacy is not reasonably achievable, housing can be designed so that in the normal course of events – sitting at the dining table, on in a living room, or working in the kitchen, the view is not directly into the main windows or into the private space associated with an apartment or development on a neighbouring site. Distance increases privacy, so privacy generally ceases to be of concern with views across a street.



Visual privacy by screening, position and orientation of windows

- 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.

This can be achieved by a range of means including positioning the internal space above outside areas, and locating windows of main living areas where they are not in close range view directly along a shared path.

- 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.

An acceptable level of acoustic privacy can be more readily achieved if it is considered at the planning stages of a development. In principle, quiet areas should be placed close to other quiet areas, and noisy areas close to noisy.

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.

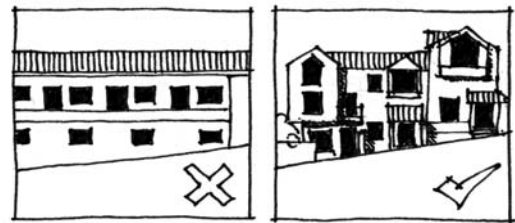
Individual dwellings should be able to be identified so that people can find them easily. A porch or setback at the entrance will provide not only shelter but also a transition between the public outside space and the privacy of the house.

- 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.

Emphasis should be given to the pedestrian entrance to the building. The main entrance is important in establishing the identity of an apartment development, as well as providing for functional needs. They should also be large enough to provide for mail boxes and passage of large items of furniture.

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

The way individual dwellings are sited, and their degree of connection with or separation from others determines their degree of individual identity or "sense of address". This, aided by the way their entrances are designed and built, can give the privacy and image qualities of an individual dwelling on its own site, even within a multi-unit development. When applied to apartments, this consideration may mean only expressing the extent of each apartment on the façade, as the address for the apartment is typically a common entry lobby.



Sense of individual identity and address for townhouses

4 Open Space Design

Good quality private open space greatly increases the amenity of a dwelling and is a source of pleasure to individual residents. Positive open space in the form of an outdoor room increases the range of activities that people can enjoy in and around their home, allows an important expression of personal identity and gives connection with the outdoors. More private open space will generally increase the amenity of most types of dwelling, and its potential to provide for a range of activities will be enhanced with qualities of accessibility from the dwelling, privacy, sunshine and shelter. The type of open space required will differ according to development type.

Objectives

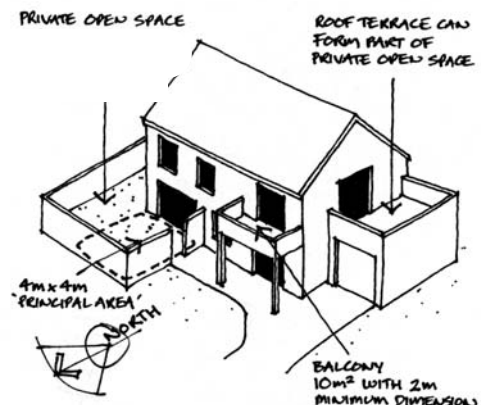
- O4.1 To ensure that the private open space provided is of a high quality that will provide a pleasant outlook, create a pleasant, safe and visually attractive setting for the dwelling and accommodate the reasonable outdoor recreational, service and storage needs of residents.
- O4.2 To provide a type 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.

Guidelines

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
 - be nominally flat with a gradient not greater than 1 in 12
 - have a degree of visual privacy consistent with privacy guidelines.

*The District Plan rules set out the **minimum** open space required for all residential dwellings to ensure sufficient space and openness is retained on site. The guidelines above outline what is required to ensure that the space provided for each unit is of high*



quality and caters for the prime recreation needs of residents. To achieve this, an area of at least 35m² is needed that is contiguous and connected to the living areas of the dwelling. While a greater amount of private outdoor space will generally increase the amenity of most dwelling types, the outdoor space will not be successful unless it is of a quality that supports the required activities.

- 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 total area provided may be split if provided for by the open space rules, and where this demonstrably leads to a higher level of amenity for occupants than would otherwise occur.

- 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.

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

Every apartment should have access to a useable area of private open space and this is most likely to be in the form of a balcony. The particular type, dimensions and appearance of private open spaces may vary, depending on the internal layout and residents’ needs, but private open space should be of size and dimensions that allows it to become usable, for example for two people to access and sit comfortably at an outdoor table. Balconies will be both private and sunny and will typically be in the order of 10m², with a minimum dimension of 2 metres. Smaller balconies or decks may be appropriate, but only where apartments are small.

Where the character of adjacent buildings, exposure to prevailing winds, intended occupancy type and architectural composition of the building justifies this, private open space for a minor proportion of units in any development may be achieved by fenestration that allows, in suitable weather, for living areas to be opened to the outside.

Shared private open space

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.
- In dwellings designed for communal living, the aggregation of the private open space required into a single shared space may bring maximum benefit. This may include, for example, housing for the elderly, student housing and papakainga.*

Shared private open space should provide for a range of users and activities. Driveways and turning areas for multi-unit housing are not defined as 'shared private open space', even though they may contribute space, openness and amenity.

Privacy for open spaces

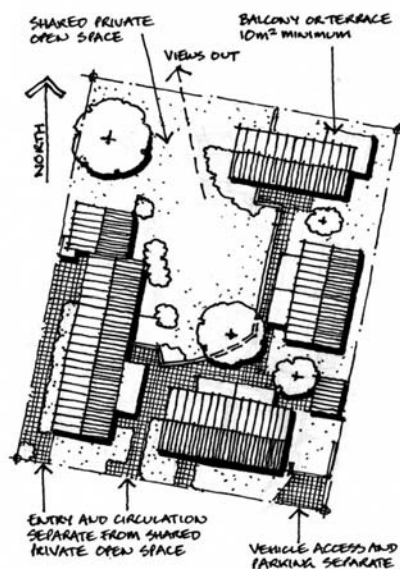
G4.6 Protect the private open spaces of dwellings from being directly overlooked by careful positioning and planning, distance, screening devices or landscaping.

Just what an acceptable level of privacy consists of in any situation depends on a range of factors. These include the intimacy of the activities being overlooked, their frequency and the frequency and ease of overlooking, other distracting views, the direction of the line of view and cultural expectations. Complete protection of privacy will not always be possible. It is anticipated that a small proportion of the private space associated with the dwelling - that nearest to the living area, will have a high level of visual privacy. Other parts of the open space may be overlooked to varying degrees.

For example, the principal area of open space, or decks or balconies provided as a means of satisfying the private open space requirements for each dwelling should not be subject to direct short range overlooking over around two-thirds of their area.

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.

It is not expected that existing levels of privacy will be maintained, however consideration should be



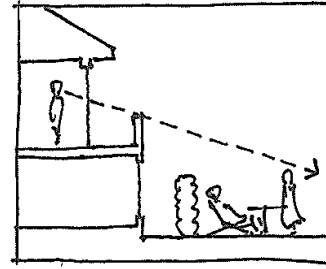
Shared private open space

given to providing privacy to parts of neighbouring existing lots that are directly connected to the dwelling.

Complete protection of privacy will not always be possible. It is anticipated that a small proportion of the private space associated with the dwelling - that nearest to the living area, will have a high level of visual privacy. Other parts of the open space may be overlooked to varying degrees.

Direct, close range views are most likely to cause loss of privacy. However, while a neighbouring open space may be visible, privacy effects are likely to be acceptable in situations where the principal view from the overlooking space is directed away from neighbouring outdoor space, and where views are at an acute angle. Privacy effects are also reduced when viewers must move right to a window, or to the edge of a deck, where they will be in full view from neighbouring properties, to obtain that view.

While new development will address privacy issues, privacy may be addressed at both sides of the boundary. If privacy is important to neighbours, and space and topography allow this, they may also need to contribute with planting or screening on their lot.



Screening with balcony balustrade

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

Acceptable architectural screening devices may be either solid or translucent panels or trellis which:

- are fixed and of durable and permanent materials
- are visually unobtrusive or integrated by colour and design into the dwelling or into the landscaping of the site
- if trellis, are open over no more than 25 percent of their area.

Landscape screening should consist of existing vegetation or new planting that can achieve a good level of screening at the time of planting. Some tree planting using 2-3 metre specimens may be required to provide privacy within the development and for neighbouring properties.

The provision of screening should be balanced with demands for sun and daylight into, and long-range outlook from, all neighbouring dwellings.

Accessway design

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

Large trees and shrubs are most effective in moderating the visual effects of long driveways and large areas of hard paving. Appropriate small-scale paving elements and landscaping will help to reduce the linearity of the space and vehicle speeds, and encourage the use of the

space for more than just the movement of vehicles.

- 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.

Such areas will be used by pedestrians and for uses other than vehicle movement and should be designed as shared surfaces. Secondary functions become more important in 'areas of change' where such surfaces may be the only ground level space open to the occupants.

Minimising the extent of hard-surfacing and providing appropriate landscaping to driveways and turning areas allows these to be both attractive and potentially attractive for other uses. Outlook will be enhanced by the use of large-scale planting, or integration with areas of lawn or garden.

- 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.

The selection of paving materials and the detailed design of the paving itself influences whether the area is viewed only as a service area or whether it adds to the visual quality and character of the development. Material choice and the composition of paving and associate landscaping should be part of a comprehensive landscape plan that is visually coherent and complements the function and style of the dwellings served.

Planting design

- G4.12 Provide planting within new development that is suitable for situation, wind and sun exposure and soil type, placing this to enhance amenity.

Planting with a scale and growing habit appropriate to site and situation is required to provide any necessary screening while allowing reasonable sun and daylight to both dwellings and open spaces.

Trees provide attractive short-range views from the dwelling, give visual interest and privacy, as well as shelter and shade for both dwellings and associated outdoor areas.

Planting influences the image of new development from the street, and can enhance visual integration into the streetscape.

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.

- 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.

Promote safety and security by providing for night-time visibility with energy-efficient, low-

glare lighting along paths and accessways leading to the development and for shared areas. Amenity effects should be considered to enhance the visual quality of the development.

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.

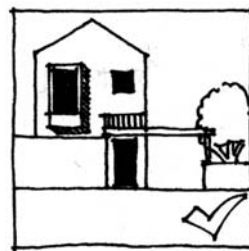
G4.16 Avoid large retaining walls that are visible from surrounding buildings and public spaces. Where retaining walls are necessary, their visibility, formal composition and visual quality are important.

Retaining structures should be avoided or minimised through effective site planning which takes into account the topography of the site. Retaining walls may be visually integrated if they are treated as part of the building, or alternatively treated as a positive landscape feature with appropriate facing and composition. Where such walls are included

- *they should be given an appropriate landscape treatment. Where retaining walls are not entirely screened by buildings from distant views, design approaches might include screening planting, or subdivision into modules of dimensions that can be seen from a distance.*
- *their quality of construction and appearance is important. Walls should also be designed to enhance outlook in short range views from the dwelling. This means they should have a texture, composition and/or integral planting that gives interest in such views. Formless concrete walls should be avoided.*

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

High front fences along an entire frontage compromise the visual quality and safety of the street environment, however some enclosure may be required to provide privacy or security for a front yard. In general fences should be low or visually permeable at the street edge. If a high front fence or wall is used, this should not comprise more than two-thirds of a frontage. In order to maintain views out to the street and along the street edge, any portion of a side boundary fence within the front yard should also be no higher than the front fence it connects to.



Allowing a view to the street

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.

Provision should be made in such a way that bins do not clutter and obstruct access along the footpath or into the development and that when the bins have been removed, the entrance space is enhanced.

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'.

This space should allow the installation of a clothes drying line in a position that is at least partially screened from the street or public space, and which even in mid-winter receives sufficient sun to allow a reasonable possibility that laundry will dry. Provision should be made for discreet open-air drying on the balcony if this is the only private open space connected to the dwelling.