

**APPENDIX TWO
CHAPTER FOUR – RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

4. RESIDENTIAL AREAS

4.1 Introduction

The Residential Areas of Wellington City are characterised by low-rise single dwellinghouses on individual lots. Marked variations exist in the character of particular neighbourhoods or suburbs. Past planning policies have combined with historical and geographic factors to determine residential character. Patterns of residential development range from the more intensive and densely populated inner city areas developed from the early days of colonial settlement through to modern subdivisions designed for the motor vehicle.

Amongst both the Inner and Outer Residential Areas are areas of Open Space, Suburban Centres, Institutional Precincts and Conservation Sites. It is the combination of the character of these different areas combined with the topography and natural environment that gives different parts of the City their different character.

Although Wellington was occupied by Maori for generations before colonial times, little physical evidence now remains of traditional Maori settlement patterns.

The character of Residential Areas is also determined by the presence of non-residential development. Many activities operate from existing houses or from purpose-built buildings in Residential Areas. These activities, which provide essential community services, include shops, churches, marae, schools, service stations, daycare centres, kohanga reo and doctors' surgeries. In some areas, activities such as hospitals, parks or motels have been established to serve wider city or regional populations. Non-residential activities are generally accepted provided they do not give rise to significant adverse effects.

Within the wider policy of containment and general intensification of suburban development, it is Council's intention to maintain and enhance the character of Residential Areas.

For the purpose of the District Plan, two broad areas have been identified: the Inner and the Outer Residential Areas.

Also within the Inner Residential Area are properties fronting Oriental Parade which have higher maximum building heights. These properties provide the capacity for medium to high rise residential development.

The Inner Residential Area adjoins the central city area and is generally contained by the Inner Town Belt. Most dwellings in the area were built around 1900 and development is intensive, with higher population densities than other Residential Areas. Compared with the Outer Residential Area, there are more multiple units – often created by division of existing houses and fewer family households. Its nineteenth century character and advantages of living close to the central city, have made this area an attractive and popular location. Some parts of Thorndon and Mount Victoria have been identified as having special architectural, streetscape or heritage character. These areas will be subject to specific District Plan controls.

Because it is close to the central city, there has been a continuing problem of people wanting to carry out non-residential activities in the Inner Residential Area. More stringent control will therefore be maintained on uses or activities in this area.

In the Outer Residential Area, houses are usually located on larger sections and developments are more spacious. Infill housing on these larger sections will reduce the setting spaciousness of these residential properties. Whether this is detrimental or beneficial to the overall character and amenity value of the neighbourhood will depend on the site context and the nature of the proposed development.

Infill housing of established suburbs is provided for in the Plan as a way to facilitate a compact, sustainable urban form. The benefits of infill housing to the neighbourhood can be diminished where the housing is poorly designed and results in reduced amenity for adjoining property owners and a reduction in streetscape quality.

In both the Inner and Outer areas new development will be provided for in a manner that will respect existing forms. Council's approach in Residential Areas is to permit appropriate activities and to assess others on a controlled or discretionary basis. This is considered necessary to protect the character and amenities of Residential Areas. The intention is to make specific development standards as flexible as possible to encourage development opportunities without harming the amenities of the area.

Permitted Activities are those which are normally undertaken in Residential Areas and allow these areas to remain the primary living environments of the city. In accordance with the aims of sustainable management no minimum site area requirement is included in this Plan, in order to encourage more intensive development. This will be closely monitored to ensure that character or amenity standards are not reduced to any significant extent.

Controlled Activities are those which are also acceptable in Residential Areas (such as early childhood centres or the use of vacant non-residential premises) but which can be assessed to ensure that the amenities, particularly those of nearby properties, are protected. Development within areas of special architectural, townscape or heritage value will also be a Controlled Activity, and their character maintained and controlled through the use of design guides.

Residential activities or developments which can not be categorised as Permitted or Controlled Activities may be considered as Discretionary Activities. This applies particularly to the establishment of non-residential activities.

Council also encourages more mixed-use development in Residential Areas. Controls will ensure that residential amenities are reasonably protected. Residential Areas provide the place where most people sleep and enjoy their leisure time, and more peaceful, quieter surroundings are expected. However, it is not the Council's intention to "freeze" all residential neighbourhoods in their current state. A greater diversity of land use will be promoted.

Under the Discretionary Activity process, design guides are also used to assess most multi-unit residential developments and other development proposals that facilitate infill housing where certain residential standards cannot be met. Council seeks to promote a consistently high standard of design for new multi-unit housing. [A design guide applies within the Oriental Bay Height Area in recognition of the area's unique development potential, high visibility, and public/private character. Council seeks to ensure that new building works enhance the existing character and amenity values of the area.]

Given the City's topography, difficult access from narrow roads, and poor siting and inadequate design of much of its older housing stock, improving accessibility and the consequent amenity values within Residential Area is an important issue. This is a particularly important issue for people with mobility restrictions and for the City's increasing population of older people. Consequently, the Council will actively seek to improve the proportion of all housing in the City that is, or can be made, accessible and usable, by older people and all others with mobility restrictions.

Council is exercising its responsibilities under the Act by including provisions to control noise, hazardous substances, and contaminated sites and to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of natural hazards. Examples include controlling residential development near high voltage transmission lines or near the Wellington fault line, and on or near former landfills.

4.2 Residential Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE

- 4.2.1 To promote the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources in Residential Areas.**

POLICIES

To achieve this objective, Council will:

- 4.2.1.1 Encourage new urban development to locate within the established urban area.**

METHODS

- Rules
- Operational activities (management of infrastructure)

The edge of the urban area of the city is defined by the interface between the Outer Residential Area and nearby Rural and Open Space Areas. Council generally intends to contain new development within the existing urban area, as it considers that continuously expanding the city's edges will not promote sustainable management. Expansion beyond the existing urban form will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the adverse effects, including cumulative effects, of such expansion can be avoided, remedied or mitigated. Adopting rules to encourage more mixed-use activity and provide for more intensive good quality building development (that maintains or enhances neighbourhood and streetscape residential character) will help keep the city compact.

The environmental results will be that the city's development occurs in a manner which will reduce transport distances, make public transport systems more viable, and make better use of existing infrastructure.

- 4.2.1.2 Provide for a greater mixture of residential and non-residential activities within Residential Areas, provided character and amenity standards are maintained.**

METHOD

- Rules
- The Urban Development Strategy

In keeping with the aim of promoting a sustainable city, residents should have the opportunity to work from home, or close to home, and should have convenient access to necessary services and facilities.

For this reason, working from home is provided for in Residential Areas and other uses compatible with residential environments may also be established.

The environmental result will be a greater mix of uses within Residential Areas which will help to reduce travel and save energy.

4.2.1.3 Encourage subdivision design and housing development that optimises resource and energy use and accessibility.

4.2.1.4 To promote a sustainable built environment in the Residential Area, involving the efficient end use of energy and other natural and physical resources and the use of renewable energy, especially in the design and use of new buildings and structures.

METHODS

- Rules
- Design Guides (Residential and Subdivision)
- National standard access design criteria
- ~~Advocacy~~ Other Mechanisms (Advocacy of Environmentally Sustainable Design principles, Education)

The form of a subdivision or housing development can promote efficiencies, for example by making the most effective use of available land and by such measures as orienting developments to the sun and improving public transport and pedestrian access. Equally, it can promote greater equity of opportunity and choice for older people and all others with mobility restrictions by employing, wherever practicable, the accessible housing design criteria in NZ Standard 4121 (or its successor). Flexible siting provisions and design guides for subdivision and multi-unit residential development have thus been included in the Plan.

~~The environmental result will be improved subdivisions and housing developments.~~

New residential housing developments are users of natural and physical resources that can have adverse effects on the environment (including cumulative effects) for example, through increased storm water run off or electricity consumption. Opportunities to incorporate sustainable building design features and to use sustainable, low impact building materials and construction methods will be encouraged to minimise potential adverse environmental effects. A development that proposes an environmentally sustainable designed building will be viewed as having a positive effect of the proposal on the environment.

Because sustainable building design involves the site-specific context and function of the dwelling or housing development, the options for taking up different design features and methods will vary from case to case. Ongoing developments in the technology and information about sustainable housing design means that options for this type of approach are likely to evolve over the life of the Plan. Accordingly, the Council will look to other research and industry organisations for guidance on the latest technology, methods and tools to achieve environmentally sustainable buildings.

Many matters relating to sustainable building design are addressed by the minimum standards outlined in the Building Act 2004 (specifically the Building Code). However, where it is practicable, sustainable building design and associated methods that go beyond the minimum standards of the Building Code will be promoted.

The environmental result will be improved subdivisions and greater uptake of environmentally sustainable design of housing developments within the Residential Area.

OBJECTIVE

4.2.2 To maintain and enhance the amenity values of Residential Areas

POLICIES

To achieve this objective, Council will:

4.2.2.1 Control the potential adverse effects of residential activities.

~~4.2.2.1A Control residential development density so that new developments do not result in a density of land use that is consistent and compatible with the surrounding residential environment.~~

4.2.2.1B Control the siting, scale and intensity of residential development buildings (particularly infill housing and multi-unit developments) to ensure such developments are appropriately located and of a density and scale that is compatible with existing surrounding development patterns in order to reduce adverse effects on residential amenity values.

METHODS

- Rules
- Residential Design Guide
- Subdivision Design Guide
- National standard access design criteria
- Advocacy

People expect that the amenity standards of the Residential Areas of the city where most people live will be maintained to a level that sustains the residents' enjoyment of their suburb. For this reason District Plan rules have been imposed.

In Residential Areas the rules are based on the use-list approach of former Plans, as Council believes that this provides the most secure mechanism to avoid unsuitable or incompatible development.

Permitted residential activities are allowed with few restrictions. Rules set minimum standards for all dwelling houses and associated buildings. The sunlight access rules are intended to protect people's access to a reasonable amount of direct sunlight. It is accepted that because of Wellington's hilly topography and form of development, full sunlight protection in all cases is not possible.

There are three tools in the Plan used to manage development density of a site. Over development of a site can result in adverse amenity effects for adjoining neighbours, and may affect residential character of a street or neighbourhood. Site coverage is the main tool used to control development density. Thresholds are set for different areas to reflect existing patterns of development density, and to allow some scope for additions and alterations. Careful consideration will be given to any proposed breach of site coverage to ensure the effects are able to be managed appropriately. Two other tools that influence development intensity include The car parking requirement per unit and the open

space requirement per unit can also influence development density. The open space requirement primarily acts to require buildings to be adequately separated from each other and to ensure that each unit on a site has sufficient outdoor space associated with it and also acts to reduce the visual dominance of buildings within a site (35m² in the Inner Residential Area and 50m² in the Outer Residential Area). A proposal that seeks to breach exceed one or more of these requirements is likely to result in site that is not compatible with surrounding properties, a highly developed site relative to surrounding properties, n over developed site. Solutions to mitigate the effects of such development proposals a highly developed site include an overdeveloped site may require a reduction in the number of units on the site or a reduction in the overall site coverage.

The permitted bulk and location standards that apply both within the Inner and Outer Residential Areas are reflective of the area's predominant development type, which is typically one dwelling per site. A single dwelling on a site, built in accordance with the bulk and location standards, will generally be of a scale and mass that is consistent with the character of the surrounding area. Single dwellings, even when built up to full site coverage and height, retain a significant degree of openness and greenery on site. However, infill housing and multi-unit developments designed and built in accordance with the bulk and location controls can have quite different effects on the amenity of surrounding properties adjoining neighbours, for example The increase in the number of units and residents on a site may adversely impact on reduced privacy, shading and reduced daylight and sunlight access for neighbouring properties. These effects are typically generated when the new units are located near boundaries and built taller than adjacent dwellings. in order to maximise the development potential of the site. At the same time, it is noted however that infill housing on smaller lots can result in positive outcomes where both the subdivision and residential dwellings are well designed to fit well into the existing neighbourhood.

The permitted activities for the Outer Residential Area provide for one dwelling to be up to 8m high and a second unit is permitted where the height of that second unit is limited to 4.5m (approximately one storey). This acknowledges that the adverse effects associated with a second unit on a site can be significantly reduced where the height of the dwelling is restricted to a single storey development. Most Inner Residential Areas only permit one dwelling per site, with a maximum height limit set to reflect the characteristics of that particular area. As comprehensively designed multi-unit developments are Discretionary Activities and assessed against the Residential Design Guide, any adverse amenity effects associated with two or more storied dwellings are able to be addressed through the design assessment process. The assessment of the proposal against the District Plan will seek to ensure that the development is consistent and compatible with the scale of dwellings in the surrounding residential environment.

In considering resource consent applications for new infill development, an assessment of the proposal's compatibility with surrounding residential development patterns will include an assessment of the primary built form characteristics and layout of surrounding properties. Where a neighbourhood contains regular patterns or consistency of residential development (eg. regular front yard setbacks, spacious rear yards, single storey dwellings, double storey dwellings) it is important that new development respect those patterns to safeguard the amenity

values of that area. ~~For example, a two storey, rear yard infill house in a street characterised by spacious rear yards will may severely affect the amenity of surrounding properties, adjoining owners. Any such development should minimise such effects by appropriate siting of the proposed dwelling and/or reducing the size and scale of the dwelling. Conversely, where the dominant housing pattern includes two storey dwellings on smaller sections (eg. new Greenfield subdivisions), it is reasonable for further development to also be of a two storey nature. However, while site context is important in considering a development proposal, past examples of infill development will not always be an applicable precedent for the density or scale of new development that should be approved, particularly where existing examples of infill development do not reflect the policies of the current Plan.~~

~~Due to the more intensive living environments often created through infill and multi unit developments, the open space requirements of the Plan are also important for achieving quality on-site amenity. Of the open space that is required for each unit (i.e. a minimum of 50m² in the Outer Residential Area and 35m² in the Inner Residential Area), it is important to note that the Residential Design Guide seeks that a minimum of 35m² of that space is of high quality and able to cater for the private recreation needs of residents. This space should be practical to manage and easily accessible from the unit itself.~~

~~The adverse effects associated with one breach of the permitted activity conditions can usually be mitigated on site, depending on the degree of the breach. However, the cumulative effects of several breaches (depending on the degree of breaches) to the permitted activities standards (particularly site coverage, sunlight access planes, height) are more likely to can result in developments that are out of scale with the surrounding environment and more are likely to generate adverse effects on surrounding properties, adjoining properties. As development of this nature is not generally anticipated by the Plan, the assessment of the consent will include consideration of whether the amenity values of adjoining neighbours surrounding properties are affected and whether the proposed development is out of scale with the surrounding residential environment.~~

~~Where written approvals are supplied as part of a resource consent application by those who may be affected by a—obtained from all persons who may be adversely affected by the proposed development, the Council will still need to consider the effects on the amenity in of the surrounding environment and unless those effects are no more than minor, then public notification will be required.~~

~~The amenity values of the City's residential resource are adversely affected by the significant lack of dwellings which are not easily accessible, including by people with mobility restrictions. Consequently Council will firmly promote the use of the accessible housing design criteria in NZ Standard 4121 (or its successor) in both new housing and in housing alterations.~~

~~The environmental result will be the maintenance of reasonable amenity standards for residents and high quality infill developments that do not detrimentally disrupt that reflect surrounding patterns of development density.~~

The Plan seeks to ensure that residential development maintains and enhances amenity values and that such development does not diminish surrounding patterns of development density at the expense of reasonable amenity standards for residents.

4.2.2.2 Control the establishment and effects of non-residential activities in Residential Areas.

METHOD

- Rules

From the earliest days of urban settlement, a wide variety of non-residential activities has been established in suburban residential neighbourhoods. These activities provide needed services, facilities or work opportunities for local residents. In some cases, the uses serve wider city or regional populations.

These activities are generally located in buildings designed for the purpose - many of them former shops for which retail uses are no longer viable. These isolated non-residential activities and small groups of shops have not been identified on the District Plan Maps but are included in the general Residential Areas as the difficulties of administering many small special zones, as well as the complexities of the restrictions that past controls have imposed, are not justified for the small benefits they bring.

Because non-residential activities can impact adversely on the amenities of Residential Areas, control over these has been maintained in the District Plan.

Nevertheless, Council supports work from home and the establishment of other non-residential activities, provided that they are appropriately located and are compatible with existing Residential Areas in scale, intensity and design of buildings. Working from home is a Permitted Activity subject to conditions to maintain residential amenities. All other non-residential activities are Controlled or Discretionary Activities and are to be carefully assessed against defined criteria to ensure that they are compatible with the character of the residential area. However, more stringent controls have been maintained around the Central City area where there is pressure for Central Area activities to establish in adjacent residential neighbourhoods. The limitations on non-residential activities in these areas will assist in protecting existing amenities.

The environmental result will be that Residential Areas are maintained primarily for residential purposes, but a mix of activities will be allowed to a level that will not detract from amenity values.

4.2.2.3 Control the adverse effects of noise within Residential Areas.

METHODS

- Rules
- Other mechanisms (Enforcement Orders, Abatement Notices)

Because noise is a particularly important amenity consideration, specific rules are included in the District Plan. The District Plan rules aim to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of noise from activities on residents. In addition to the rules the enforcement order and abatement notice procedures of the Act will be used to control unreasonable noise.

Traffic noise is not controlled through rules in the District Plan and alternative actions will have to be initiated to avoid, remedy or mitigate intrusions from this source.

However within the Outer Residential Area adjoining Wellington International Airport there is a need to recognise the potential effects of airport noise on new residential development and conversely, the potential constraints which new residential development of the airport. The rules relating to residential development near the airport (being the land inside the airnoise boundary depicted on Map 35) reflect these issues. Reference will also be made to the objectives and policies in chapter 10 of this Plan when considering resource consent applications for residential development within that area.

The environmental result will be the improvement of the noise environment in Residential Areas.

4.2.2.4 Manage the road network to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of road traffic on Residential Areas.

METHODS

- Rules
- Operational activities (Traffic Management)
- Other mechanisms (WCC Bylaws)

Traffic on roads, whether active or stationary, can have major impacts on the amenities of Residential Areas. Council will continue to use traffic management techniques to control congestion and parking.

Council is also aware of the impact that heavy trucks and similar vehicles can have on residential neighbourhoods in terms of noise and general disturbances and will seek to minimise through-traffic, particularly at night. Bylaws may be used to exclude heavy trucks on certain streets.

The environmental result will be the minimisation of the adverse effects of road traffic in Residential Areas.

4.2.2.5 Manage any adverse effects of earthworks.

METHODS

- Rules
- Other mechanisms (WCC Bylaws)

Earthworks associated with land development and building is an essential activity throughout the Residential Area. The Plan therefore allows most forms of earthworks but retains controls to prevent unnecessary visual scarring of the landscape. Issues concerning the safety of earthworks are dealt with by the City Bylaws.

OBJECTIVE

- 4.2.3 To maintain and enhance the physical character of Residential Areas and identified areas of special streetscape or townscape character.**

POLICIES

To achieve this objective, Council will:

- 4.2.3.1 Control the siting, scale and intensity of new residential buildings to reflect the differences between older and more recent suburban Residential Areas.**

METHODS

- Rules
- Residential Design Guide
- [Oriental Parade Design Guide]¹
- Other mechanism (Building Act)

The rules for all new residential buildings have been set to recognise the differences between the older, more densely developed Inner Residential Areas and the Outer Areas, including Tawa. The Inner Residential rules are more lenient and acknowledge that development in these areas is more compact and intensive. The residential character of the Outer Residential Area is more diverse. It is a result of varied section size and shape, topography, building age and form, and other geographic features including bush and streams. The housing stock in many Outer Residential Area suburbs has accommodated a wide variety of additions and alterations over the past century adding to its diversity. Recently subdivided suburbs have a more consistent character, typically being two-storied dwellings on smaller, squarer sections. In both the Inner and Outer Areas the way the rules are applied will permit development in a manner that reflects their general character. The rules include variations aimed at accommodating different development forms in localised areas such as Oriental Bay.

In view of the prominence of the land in Oriental Bay, and in recognition that the development potential of those properties should be sustainably developed, residential structures can be built higher than in other parts of the Inner Residential Area. These properties are subject of specific height limits which reflect the varying topography particularly the escarpment below properties in Roxburgh Street.

Council recognises that in urban design terms Oriental Parade is visually significant to the immediate surrounds, the harbour foreshore and the city as a whole. Building heights and the type of development should be carefully considered in these contexts. Additionally the scale of development that may occur is such that there is potential for adverse effects to residential and visual amenity. [To this end a design guide has been prepared for the Oriental Bay Height Area (as shown in Appendix 4 of Chapter 5). The design guide will be implemented via the resource consent process to ensure that new buildings, and significant additions and alterations to existing buildings in the area make a positive contribution to the streetscape and general amenity of the area.]²

The environmental result will be the continued development of housing which generally reflect the siting, scale and intensity of its area.

- 4.2.3.1.A Require on-site open space to be provided as part of new residential developments to ensure a suitable degree of on-site green open space is provided on site to mitigate potential adverse effects and assist with the integration of new developments into the existing residential environment.**

METHODS

- Rules
- Advocacy
- Residential Design Guide
- Subdivision Design Guide

The traditional development pattern in both the Inner and Outer Residential Areas is a single dwelling per site. As a result most properties retain a reasonable area of open space on site. Rear yards with mature visually prominent vegetation and well landscaped front gardens are typical features that contribute to the character and amenity of most established suburbs. The building bulk of new development (whether it is one additional unit or several additional units) together with the hard surface areas required for vehicle parking and manoeuvring, can alter the valued character and amenity by reducing the sense of greenness and open space and degree of separation from other buildings. The requirement to provide open space is an important tool for ensuring that new developments are of appropriate density and are capable of providing a suitable degree of openness and greening on-site. It can also help to:

- Provide a setting for the new buildings and structures on site
- Integrate the new development into the surrounding area
- Soften the visual impact of new buildings and structures as viewed from surrounding public spaces
- Provide open space allowing for substantial trees and vegetation on site.
- Enable open space areas that can help to increase soil permeability, reducing storm water
- Enhance the on-site amenity of the development where the space is well-designed and connected to the main living areas.

For these reasons, open space is an integral part of new residential developments. When a development seeks a reduction in the amount of open space provided on a site in order to maximise permitted site coverage or to make provision for off-street car parking, it is often a signal that that the site is being overdeveloped. As open space is also a means of managing development density of a site in order to retain residential character, the provision of adequate open space on a site may mean that the maximum permitted site coverage is not able to be achieved. In this situation reduced site coverage, or a reduction in the number of household units will generally be the appropriate way to manage development density on the site (rather than a waiver of the open space requirement) to ensure streetscape amenities and residential character is maintained.

4.2.3.1.B Minimise hard surfaced areas associated with new residential development and increase opportunities for green open space permeable open space areas and planting to enhance visual amenity and to integrate the development into the character of the surrounding area.

METHODS

- Advocacy
- Subdivision Design Guide
- Residential Design Guide

Though the Residential Areas are diverse, they can be characterised by a sense of openness and landscape features that enhance soil permeability, greenery and the presence of mature vegetation. Infill housing and multi-unit developments can compromise this these characteristic features due to the percentage of the site taken up with building footprint, and vehicle parking and manoeuvring space. For this reason Council will seek to ensure that the hard surfacing associated with new residential developments is kept to a minimum. A

reduction in the use of hard surfacing on a site will also generally help to maintain permeability of the site, reducing storm water run-off.

4.2.3.1C Encourage the retention of mature, visually prominent trees and bush in association with site redevelopment

METHOD

- Advocacy
- Subdivision Design Guide
- Residential Design Guide

Mature, visually dominant trees and areas of regenerating bush make an important contribution to the amenity of many established suburbs. Mature trees are often located along site boundaries, helping to define traditional subdivision patterns and enhance streetscape character. New residential development may result in the loss of such trees and bush. Proposals that seek to retain mature, visually dominant trees and bush during site redevelopment are encouraged as this will help to integrate the new development into the surrounding environment and will be viewed as a positive effect of the proposal. Where mature trees and bush have been removed recently or are proposed to be removed to facilitate new development, the landscaping plan will need to demonstrate how new planting will be effective in mitigating the visual effects of new residential dwellings.

4.2.3.2 Maintain the special character of identified residential character areas.

METHODS

- Rules
- Design Guides (Mt Victoria North, Thorndon)

Within Residential Areas particular neighbourhoods have an identifiable or distinct character. Wellington examples include Thorndon, Mount Victoria and [Aro Valley]¹. Thorndon, Mt Victoria and [Aro Valley]² also contain large numbers of older buildings which collectively are important to the identity of Wellington City as a whole. A number of these buildings are listed heritage buildings. Council considers the collective character of these areas is important and they should be more fully protected from inappropriate or unsympathetic development.

Therefore, Council has incorporated, as part of this Plan, Design Guides for some residential neighbourhoods (eg Thorndon Character Area Design Guide) and placed extra controls on multi-unit housing for others (eg Thorndon, Mt Victoria and [Aro Valley]³). The Council has also included rules restricting the demolition of pre-1930 buildings in Thorndon and Mt Victoria. In those places significant concentrations of older buildings create particularly distinctive streetscape character.

The benefits of protecting the special character of these areas, which contribute much to the qualities of the city, outweigh the costs of administering and complying with such rules.

The environmental result will be the ongoing development of identified areas in a manner that will maintain their character.

4.2.3.3 Control the potential adverse effects of infill housing and multi-unit residential development.

METHODS

- Rules
- National standard access design criteria

- Advocacy
- Residential Design Guide

To allow effective use of land in the developed parts of the city, the Plan provides for infill housing and multi-unit residential developments. Infill housing and multi-unit housing can significantly alter neighbourhood character and streetscape, particularly where smaller sites are amalgamated and established development patterns are changed. Council seeks to promote excellence in the design of multi-unit residential developments to ensure that neighbourhood amenity values are maintained and enhanced. To ensure that all multi-unit developments are designed to fit in well be compatible with existing residential development; proposals will be assessed against the Residential Design Guide as Discretionary (Restricted) Activities. Infill housing that does not meet the height requirements will also be assessed against the Residential Design Guide to ensure residential character and streetscape is maintained and enhanced. design excellence and compatibility with the surrounding residential environment is achieved. The Residential Design Guide identifies various design principles, which if followed, will achieve improved building aesthetics. to be followed but does not seek to impose aesthetic style control. The benefits of achieving high standards of development and more efficiency in the city are expected to be greater than the costs of promoting good development in this way.

The permitted bulk and location standards that apply both within the Inner and Outer Residential Areas are reflective of the area's predominant development type, which is typically one dwelling per site. A single dwelling on a site, built in accordance with the bulk and location standards, will generally be of a scale and mass that is consistent with the character of the surrounding area. Single dwellings, even when built up to full site coverage and height, retain a significant degree of openness and greenery on site. However, multi-unit developments (and some infill housing developments) designed and built in accordance with the bulk and location controls can have quite different effects on neighbourhood character because:

- *The increased number of units and residents on a site can potentially adversely impact on privacy and overlooking.*
- *The height and mass of buildings, being often substantially larger than is characteristic of the surrounding neighbourhood can adversely affect the quality of the streetscape character.*
- *The configuration of multi-unit developments is such that the Sunlight Access Plane controls do not apply between units within the site which would otherwise provide a sense of openness and help to break up building form.*
- *Increased site area required for vehicle manoeuvring and parking (including visitor carparking) can adversely affect the streetscape and visual appearance of the property due to the greater use of hard surfacing.*

For these reasons the Council will carefully assess whether it is appropriate to will not apply a permitted baseline assessment (ie. a comparison of the proposed activity against the permitted activities outlined in the Plan) when considering the effects of new infill and multi-unit developments on the surrounding residential character.

The accessibility of multi-unit dwellings is an important design issue, as it affects the amenity values and the sustainability of the resource over the long term. Council will promote the accessibility of multi-unit development to ensure that a high proportion of new dwelling units

are designed to be accessible and usable by older people and all others with mobility restrictions.

The environmental result will be new multi-unit residential developments with better design standards.

4.2.3.4 Maintain and enhance the streetscape by controlling the siting and design of structures on or over roads and through programmes of street improvements.

METHODS

- Rules
- Operational activities (Urban Design Strategies)

Because Wellington's topography limits the availability of suitable land for building, road reserve has often been used for building and other activities. Most of the development thus allowed has been for garages, carports or cardecks for adjacent houses. Control will be maintained over such developments to ensure that their size and design is appropriate to the location and that streetscape amenities will be maintained. In some hillside situations, controls are needed to protect views. Where building in the air space above roads is proposed such as footbridges, verandahs, balconies or eaves, particular consideration will be given to the impact on the streetscape. Council also undertakes a wide range of works which improve the city's streetscape, including upgrading and tree-planting programmes. This focus will continue.

An important aspect of enhancing the amenity values of the City's residential streets is the promotion of ease of access and use for people with mobility restrictions, as well as for all other pedestrians, in the design and construction of streetworks and street enhancement projects.

The environmental results will be enhanced streetscape design and appearance.

4.2.3.5 Control the erection of signs within Residential Areas.

METHOD

- Rules

The suburban area is generally free from signs except for those on commercial premises. For this reason, District Plan controls will prevent the proliferation of signs, thereby protecting existing amenities. Temporary signs will be permitted for specified purposes.

The environmental result will be residential neighbourhoods which are generally free from signs.

OBJECTIVE

- 4.2.4 To ensure that the adverse effects of new subdivisions are avoided, remedied or mitigated.**

POLICIES

To achieve this objective, Council will:

- 4.2.4.1 Control infill subdivision within residential areas to facilitate future residential land use subject to conditions or criteria which**

ensure adverse effects, including cumulative effects, are avoided, remedied or mitigated and that sites are suitable for intended uses.

4.2.4.1A Control subdivision lot size and design within established residential suburbs to provide for flexibility in allotment sizes future land uses without unduly compromising the overall density of the surrounding residential area. This will assist to avoid minimise adverse effects on residential character and amenity of adjoining properties, particularly where subdivision facilitates an infill dwelling of more than one storey.

METHOD

- Rules
- Subdivision Design Guide
- Residential Design Guide

To help promote a sustainable city Council seeks to minimise the peripheral expansion of urban development and to allow more intensive development within the existing urban area where the adverse neighbourhood effects of such development can be minimised. Plan controls will work to ensure that the general residential character and amenity of particular neighbourhoods or character areas is maintained upon the subdivision of land.

The Plan does not use a 'minimum lot size' tool to control the density of subdivisions. This is a deliberate measure, recognising that Wellington's hilly topography makes it difficult to facilitate infill subdivisions that maintain a traditional allotment lot size and shape. The approach recognises that well designed residential dwellings, provided they meet all the permitted activity conditions, are possible on smaller sites. This approach has led to numerous examples of dwellings being constructed on very small sites, particularly in the Outer Residential Area where lot sizes are larger and able to be subdivided.

The subdivision rule regime recognises that subdivision can be used to formalise or modify land tenure arrangements around lawfully existing landuses without creating significant adverse effects. Also, subdivisions that create lots of a certain size which are easily capable of containing residential activities that will fit with the typical residential character of an area are also less likely to create adverse effects on residential amenity or streetscape character. As a result, these types of subdivisions are categorised as Controlled Activities.

Where subdivision is used to facilitate new development that may not be in keeping with the surrounding residential character then these will be processed as Discretionary Activities. This approach has resulted in a development pattern whereby dwelling footprints are smaller (to meet the site coverage requirements of the Plan) and dwellings are correspondingly taller in order to create the necessary floor space. The adverse effects associated with very small sections can be avoided if the subdivision is well designed (and of a sufficient size and shape) to allow future residential dwellings to be built at a density appropriate to the character of the surrounding neighbourhood. The adverse effects associated with a second dwelling on a site can be reduced where the height of the second dwelling is restricted to a single storey development. Accordingly the permitted height of a second dwelling on site is set at a threshold to encourage single storey infill housing developments.

The Council exercises control over lot size and design with assistance from the Subdivision Design Guide to ensure that the resulting development is compatible with the surrounding area. For such infill development to be properly assessed against the Subdivision Design Guide, it is necessary that subdivision applications include plans outlining the proposed development. These plans will also be assessed against some parts of the Residential Design Guide to ensure the proposed allotment is capable of facilitating a residential dwelling that respects the surrounding residential amenity values. Covenants may be imposed to ensure that future

residential dwellings will be of a scale or height that is appropriate for the surrounding residential context. ~~the residential dwelling proposed is built in accordance with any approved subdivision.~~ This requirement need not be imposed for Controlled Activity subdivision as such lots of that size are likely to be capable of facilitating a dwelling that is compatible with the surrounding residential environment.

Subdivision of land often requires the written approval of affected landowners, due to the proposed position of a new boundary which results in an existing dwelling not complying with the Plan. Where written approvals are supplied as part of a resource consent application by those who may be affected by a ~~obtained from all persons who may be adversely affected by the~~ proposed development, the Council will still need to consider the effects on the amenity ~~in~~ of the surrounding environment and unless those effects are no more than minor, then public notification will be required.

The environmental result will be the efficient and sustainable use of existing residential lots in Residential Areas that are well designed to maintain and enhance residential amenity and character.

4.2.4.2 Control greenfield subdivision to ensure that adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated and that if land is developed, it is developed in a way that will lead to neighbourhoods which have a high amenity standard and which are adequately integrated with existing infrastructure.

METHODS

- Rules
- Design Guides

The District Plan Maps identify the extent of urban (primarily residential) areas on the basis of existing residential and suburban centre development and land subject to current subdivision consents. In accordance with the purpose of sustainable management, the aim is to provide for the intensification of land use within the urban area and to accommodate, where adverse effects can be avoided, remedied or mitigated, the orderly development of new subdivisions on the fringes of the existing urban area.

In most circumstances greenfield subdivision will be considered as part of a District Plan change to extend the urban area. This enables the full effects of the potential development to be assessed. Assessments will include the design of the subdivision, its impact on the natural and physical environment, and constraints (such as natural hazards) imposed by the environment.

The environmental result will be a more compact city and, where approved, the development of new subdivisions that are well designed and integrated with existing infrastructure.

4.2.4.3 Ensure the sound design, development and servicing of all subdivisions.

METHODS

- Rules (compliance with Code of Practice for Urban Land Development)
- Information (promotion of good subdivision practice)

Because Council is concerned that all new subdivision be developed to a high standard, controls have been imposed. To encourage the sound design, development

and appropriate servicing of subdivisions, the subdivision of land will be assessed in terms of the Design Guidelines for Subdivision and Council's Code of Practice for Land Development.

The environmental result will be the development of well-designed and properly serviced subdivisions that will maintain amenity standards in Residential Areas.