

# Appendix 5: Oriental Bay

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## 5.1 Significance of Oriental Bay to the City

Oriental Parade is a visually prominent residential area with a unique character and strong identity. But it is not a typical residential suburb. The linear form and built-up urban character of Oriental Parade, its water's edge location and closeness to the central city, make the area a unique residential location.

In townscape terms it is a unique high density residential environment with an urban character, strong recreational dimension and public significance.

Creating the foreground of views to Oriental Bay, it is a distinctive element of Wellington's urban image. The area is an established recreational destination and an integral part of the city's public environment.

Council recognises the potential of Oriental Parade for future high density residential development. However, it is important to ensure that new development along Oriental Parade is of high design quality and enhances the area's collective character, amenity value and public significance. The intent of this Design Guide is to ensure new development achieves these objectives.

### *Visual Prominence and Landmark Significance*

Set in a prominent natural setting along the water's edge Oriental Bay is an area with a landmark significance and townscape value. Its expressive landform and distinctive building character, enhanced by the presence of St Gerard's Monastery, provide important visual references within the city.

### *Public or Private Environment?*

Oriental Bay has a public as well as a private dimension. Oriental Bay is a highly valued residential area with strong amenity value. At the same time it is also a popular recreational destination. The public promenade along Oriental Parade and associated Oriental Bay foreshore support a wide variety of activities attracting residents and visitors alike. The promenade is a unique extension



*Oriental Parade - a visually prominent area with strong identity*

of the Wellington waterfront. It is part of the route around the bays from the airport to the city and an element of a larger recreational network with connections to the Town Belt. Oriental Bay’s public character is extended and reinforced by its position in this important network of connections.

#### *Sense of Place*

The unusual contrast between the linear built-up edge of Oriental Parade and the picturesque layout of the hillside houses, together with the historic value of St Gerard’s Monastery and its setting, give the area a memorable image and a strong sense of place, contributing to the city’s collective identity.

#### *Diversity*

The Oriental Bay hillside houses are mostly older dwellings with common characteristics and a general consistency of form and scale, while Oriental Parade itself has a variable building character. It is a mixture of new and old, tall and low buildings in a variety of building types and architectural styles. This accounts for the visual diversity of the area, which is further accentuated by the varying topography and the curved outline of the street.



*Memorable image*

## 5.2 Character Overview

Buildings along Oriental Parade provide the foreground of views to Oriental Bay obtained from various locations within the city. The form, scale and quality of these buildings, and the particular way the building frontages address the street, has a direct impact on the public quality of the area.

The character of Oriental Parade, along its land-ward side, is primarily residential. Non-residential activities along the land-ward side of Oriental Parade are limited in number and include several eating places, a dairy and a few shop/office type activities, located primarily within the ground levels of existing buildings.

#### *Heritage*

A number of buildings on Oriental Parade listed as heritage items in the District Plan. There are two clusters of listed heritage buildings along Oriental Parade. The Charlesworth Houses below Oriental Terrace, and the group from 294-306 Oriental Parade. The Charlesworth Houses in particular are notable for their consistent age, type, design and scale.

#### *Structure*

Oriental Parade has a linear form, constrained by the adjacent hills and a general lack of flat land. The structure of the area is characterised by long narrow blocks and a limited number of cross streets.



*188-200 Oriental Parade - a notable collection of listed heritage buildings with consistent age, form and scale*



*Relationship to heritage buildings is an important design consideration*

## Building type

### *Diversity in form, type and style*

Oriental Parade has a diverse building character with no pronounced consistency of building form, type or architectural style. Half of the buildings along Oriental Parade were built prior to 1920, with most of the remaining buildings constructed in the 60's, 70's and 80's. A number of more recent apartment buildings were built in the period 1990-2003 - a trend that is continuing.

Oriental Parade has a diverse but distinctly urban character based on this mixture of older and newer buildings with and variable size, age, type and architectural style. These range from old villas and art-deco apartment buildings to contemporary tall apartment developments.

### *Apartments are common*

Multi-storey apartment buildings represent the most typical and important change along Oriental Parade. Recent development most often occurs on amalgamated sites in the form of apartment blocks. Site amalgamation occurs both between neighbouring sites along the street, as well as between Oriental Parade sites and adjacent sites on the hillside.

Multi-storey apartment blocks are an appropriate building type for Oriental Parade. However, the apartment block, as a particular type of multi-unit development, can raise specific design issues and residential amenity concerns, apart from streetscape issues. These relate to privacy, quality of natural lighting and private open space. Integration into the landform, landscaping and vehicle access are also important.

### *Non-residential activity*

Along the sea-ward side there are a number of non-residential buildings such as The Band Rotunda, Freyberg Pool, and the Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club (RPNYC), which together with the Oriental Bay foreshore and the Clyde Quay Marina support the recreational character of the promenade.

Some buildings accommodate non-residential ground level activities that support the public use of the area. New development should recognise and continue this type of use.

## Building size

### *Variable height*

The two storey villa and the apartment block are recurring building types, often leading to contrasting height. This varies between 2 and 12 storeys)

Building depth varies between 12m and 25m and is typically limited to the flat area within each lot.



*Diversity*



*Mix of old and new, tall and low buildings*

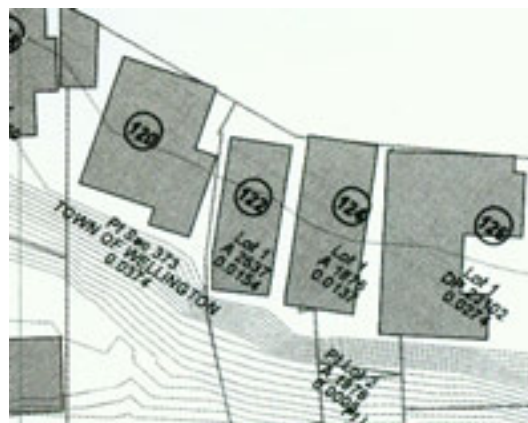


*Ground level activities that support the public use of the area*

## Landform and character

### *Building on the flat*

Building footprints of large new development should recognise the predominant pattern of building depth, which is typically limited to the flat area of each site. This is to reduce both the amount of earthworks and the visual perception of bulk.



*The depth of building footprints is typically limited to the flat area of each site*

## Intensity of development

### *Sense of high intensity*

The prevalence of apartment blocks is leading to an increasing intensity of development.

Oriental Parade provides opportunities for high density residential development, which often occurs on amalgamated sites. As a result, the building bulk of new development can be visually dominating, especially where the combination of the height, length and/or width of the proposed building is significantly greater than that of its built surroundings.



*Multi-storey apartment blocks - a recurring building type*

## Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street

### *Strong street edge definition and building alignment*

Oriental Parade has a street edge strongly defined by buildings, garages or low fences. Most buildings are built up to the street boundary. Where buildings are setback, their front yards are minimal, typically between 1m and 2m. New development should continue and reinforce the existing street edge definition along Oriental Parade.

Most buildings are aligned with the street and with each other and face the street with their narrow side.

Oriental Parade buildings present a positive “public face” to the street. Balconies, bay windows and pedestrian entrances are common features of existing building frontages.



*A strongly defined street edge*

## Side and rear yards

### *Minimal side yards*

Buildings along Oriental Parade have small separation distances typically between 1m and 2m.

## Vehicle access and parking

### *On-site garaging*

The majority of the buildings have on-site garages. Most of the garages are integrated into the building. Ground levels of new buildings used for carparking require special design attention.

## Building Form

### *Simple rectangular forms*

Most apartment blocks have a simple rectangular form and are built to the street edge.

The building bulk, form and scale of new apartment development are primary urban design concerns, particularly for developments on amalgamated sites. Site amalgamation allows building dimensions that are much larger than those of neighbouring buildings. As a result, the bulk of new development can be visually dominating. It can affect the residential amenity of adjacent buildings and require significant excavations.

### *Mix of roof forms*

Hipped and gabled roof forms are typical for the older dwellings, while flat roofs are characteristic for apartment buildings. Stepped/cascading form is not typical for the area and should be avoided.

The tops of Oriental Parade buildings (because of the area's location and topography) play a significant part in shaping the collective silhouette of the city. Building tops feature prominently in both near and distant views of the area and can be viewed from various public and private spaces within and around the area.

The tops of Oriental Parade buildings form the foreground to views of the wider Oriental Bay area. The design of building tops, especially when they project directly against the greenery of the hills, as those below St Gerard's Monastery, are particularly important.

The design of the tops of taller buildings needs particular consideration to ensure they contribute to a strong and distinctive silhouette line.

## Façade treatment

### *Diversity and visual complexity*

The diversity of building types and architectural styles, the presence of heritage buildings and the nature of activities along the public promenade contribute to a visually stimulating environment. New development should reinforce and enhance these qualities.

Despite the diverse building character there are some common design features throughout the area such as vertical window proportions, projecting bays and balconies, façade relief and detail.

The detailed treatment of street elevations is important as it adds visual interest and enhances the quality of the street. This is



*“Stepped” building form is not typical of the area*



*Building tops that project directly against the greenery of the escarpment - a particular concern*



*Distinctive building top adds interest to the skyline*



*Diversity and visual complexity*

particularly relevant to the pedestrian nature and public character of Oriental Parade.

Many recent developments on amalgamated sites have street frontages much wider than those typical for the area. The design of their street facades is often characterised by strong horizontal banding and strip glazing, while the side elevations are largely treated as blank walls. This compromises the scale relationship between old and new buildings and affects the overall quality and cohesiveness of the streetscape, a pattern that should not be followed.

#### *Visible side walls*

The height differences between adjacent buildings along Oriental Parade make their side elevations or parts of them visible from the street. Beyond the range of the street, buildings or parts of them can be seen in relation to each other from the interiors of other buildings or from neighbouring public spaces. The expressive topography of the wider Oriental Bay area provides multiple opportunities for viewing the backs, sides and tops of the Oriental Parade buildings. In this sense all building elevations that can be seen from public spaces or have a direct visual relationship to the street or adjacent buildings, deserve careful design treatment.



*Side elevations visible from the street*



*Façade features and detail on side elevations*

## **Materials**

#### *Diversity of cladding materials*

Buildings along Oriental Parade use a variety of external materials ranging from weatherboard cladding and corrugated iron to concrete, plaster finish and roof tiles. Despite the variety of cladding materials, the area as a whole is characterised by predominantly light exterior colours.



*Predominance of light exterior colours, variety of external materials*

## **Frontage landscaping and fencing**

#### *Very shallow or no front gardens*

The older villas and other buildings set back from the street usually have small front gardens. Most other buildings are built right to the street edge and the ground level of recent buildings is usually devoted to carparking. As a result, ground level street facades often have a utilitarian character and make little contribution to the pedestrian nature of the area and its streetscape quality.

## 5.3 Sub-areas within Oriental Bay

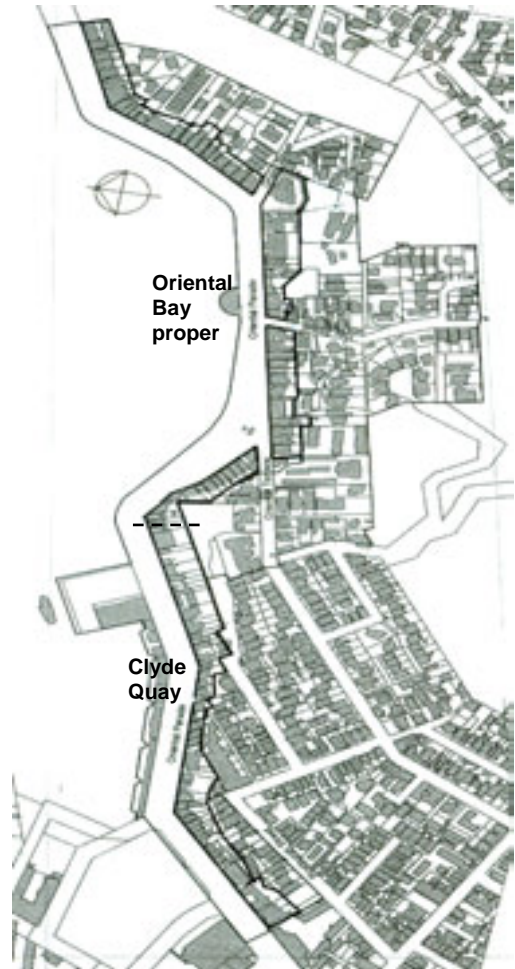
Oriental Parade has two distinctive parts determined by the character of the landform - the part below and west of St Gerard's Monastery (sometimes referred to as Clyde Quay) and Oriental Bay proper, to the east.

### Oriental Bay proper

Oriental Bay proper, the area east of St Gerard's Monastery, forms part of a natural amphitheatre. Compared to the Clyde Quay area, Oriental Bay proper has a more gentle topography and contains a higher concentration of multi-storey apartment buildings.

### Clyde Quay

The Clyde Quay area is characterised by a steeper topography and a gently curving layout. St Gerard's Monastery, together with the surrounding Mt Victoria dwellings and the greenery of the escarpment (often referred to as the "green ribbon"), are landmark elements that make this area a particularly sensitive environment. Public views of St Gerard's Monastery and its setting are of special importance.



*Oriental Bay Height Area and sub-areas*