

## PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN HEARING NOTES 20220225

My name is Steve Dunn

I have lived at 1 Nikau Street in Newtown for the past 33 years

I want to talk to two elements of my submission –

1. Increasing residential building density
2. Provision and protection of Public Open Space

### DOING DENSITY WELL

The WCC Sect 42a Report discounted the need for a community spatial plan process or a new objective because the District Plan review process has now finished and now the hearing process has commenced.

Well, as part of the hearing process, I still maintain spatial planning should continue and that a community spatial plan for Newtown is warranted. Like the design guides appended to the PDP, a spatial plan would guide and direct development that would give better outcomes for our community while recognising the aims of the NPS on Urban Design. It can be demonstrated that growth can be accommodated in Newtown within development sites that do not significantly impact on neighbours, like the Red Design study. (*Newtown Plan, referred to in the NRA oral submission yesterday*)

Over the past 20 years, there has recognised that higher density on Adelaide Road is warranted on the main transport spine. But there has been little progress with only one residential 6 multistorey building on the corner of King Street completed, and that was only with government underwriting. Across the road, Stacks have moved into a refurbished 2 storey building – a lost opportunity. There is obviously a need for guidance and incentives, if higher density is to become reality in an area that has been promoted for intensive growth.

There are examples of density done well in Newtown – the Regent Park apartments have multistorey and 2 storey units that do not impact on neighbouring properties. Infill of 4 storey apartments in Constable St, Rintoul / Columbo St, Hall/ Riddiford St fit well into the local environment while giving added density

To me, the National Policy Statement in Urban Design (NPS-UD) is a blunt instrument for the need for additional housing. There is little guidance on where higher density should be focussed in a more refined way that recognises the wider community. Instead, there is now encouragement to build higher with limited setbacks.

A case in point is for 42a Riddiford Street (*refer to the marketing material circulated from the real estate agent to sell 40, 42 and 42a Riddiford St*) that had a private plan change (*Plan change 79 in 2015*) that allowed the zoning from Inner Residential to Centres Area but with 9 metre (*3 storey*) height limit, setbacks and recession planes because it adjoins a residential character area. The

property is now for sale with 40 and 42 Riddiford Street that has potential for 22 m (6 storey) development. The rising ground at 42a means that new development will be significantly taller than originally consented in the private plan change, even more higher than those currently on Riddiford Street. This will leave the neighbours in shadow and the absentee landlord, that allowed demolition by neglect, to walk away with increased capital gains. *(Plan change 79 specifically highlighted the 9 m restriction to give some protection to neighbours but now government policy has cancelled this)*

## **PROVISION AND PROTECTION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

There are many policies and reference to providing green infrastructure, green links and a public open space network under the PDP. With residential intensification, particularly in the inner city, like Te Aro, there will be need for new parks. Currently, open space improvements upgrade existing parks or edges along road reserves. Purchasing property for open space has been quoted as 'too expensive' and has not happened since Midland Park was created.

Given the conversion of buildings and establishment of apartments in the central city, open space will be more valued, and I would like to see a guidance on funding and using Development Contributions to create new open space that has a specific minimum size around 2 ha as well as incorporating green infrastructure like stormwater management and trees. *(Glover park 1.9ha, Cobblestone 1.5ha. New open space areas could include The Oaks (temporary building), Te Aro)*

There are numerous studies that identify green spaces and vegetation as giving health benefits but there is little guidance on how this is defined on the ground. Development Contributions should be used now to purchase land for future open space but it must be targeted and dedicated for that use, not general maintenance. It is not going to get cheaper and there are options available. Monies from the increasing number of ratepayers can be used to fund development and maintenance of these parks. Adequate space for trees, which are in scale with the building environment, needs to be defined and incorporated into policy documents to ensure the health of trees and people. *Take note of the points made by the previous presenter, Paul Blashke.*

Furthermore, these open spaces and trees need adequate protection from development. This should include zoning them under the Reserves Act and widen tree protection definitions. Why isn't Frank Kitts Park identified as a reserve on the WCC Parks and Reserves map database? This is a major destination park and like Waitangi Park, should be classified under the Reserves Act to ensure protection from development.

If parks are to be the lungs for the urban environment for a liveable city, additional open space and the protection of it, is critical.



Thank you, Steve Dunn