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Appendix 2: THORNDON PLACE BASED STUDY

Absolutely

POSITIVELY

ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Wellington

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

Wellington City Council has the responsibility under the Resource Management Act to keep the District Plan up to date. The District Plan is the City's planning rule book which manages the use and development of the City's natural and physical resources. From time to time, sections of the plan are assessed and updated.

Late in 2008, Wellington City Council began a review of the District Plan rules for the suburban centres and the residential areas of the city. This review excluded the central business district. It was part of the Council's 10-year rolling review of the Wellington City District Plan.

In recent years, planning rules in residential areas have been reassessed and in many suburbs of Wellington, controls have been introduced in order to protect heritage places from demolition or significant alterations. With this in mind, as a part of the initial work for the review of residential areas of the city, the Council commissioned a study of Thorndon. The aim was to determine whether there were any groups of residential buildings that warranted special identification because of their heritage values. Work was undertaken by consultants with planning, historical and architectural expertise. The study identified areas in Thorndon which had special characteristics. The study was called the Thorndon Heritage Project and assisted with informing Council in considering options that might be used for managing the suburb into the future.

From December 2008 to April 2009 the Council consulted on the draft residential and suburban centres plan changes. The consultation included a range of options for managing heritage in Thorndon for

consideration. Due to high levels of interest in the Thorndon Heritage Project results, the consultation timeframe for Thorndon was extended to 29 May 2009.

Subsequent to that extension, several further phases of consultation were undertaken including community meetings and workshops with invited participants representing a range of community organisations in the suburb. As a result of the workshops a proposal to prepare a place-based plan for Thorndon was presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee on August 2010. Council approved the proposal to prepare a place-based plan which is the subject of this report.

1.2 Project Area

The study covers the part of the suburb of Thorndon which is zoned "Inner Residential" by the District Plan as shown by the map in section 2.0. It includes the long narrow strip of residential streets to the east of Tinakori Road at the base of Te Ahumairangi Hill. It also includes the inner residential areas of Hobson Street, Hobson Crescent, Fitzherbert Terrace, Portland Crescent and Selwyn Terrace. The area around Glenbervie Terrace, Ascot Street, Parliament Street are not included in the study as the SPC meeting of 5 August 2010 resolved to make this area a Heritage Area covered by the heritage area provisions of the District Plan. The suburban centre at Tinakori Road is not included. Plan Change 75 proposed this suburban centre as a Heritage Area which is now its current status.

1 Introduction

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of preparing a place-based study for Thorndon is to provide a broad analysis of the character of discrete neighbourhoods within the suburb. This will give a sound basis from which to make recommendations for how change will be managed in the future, and will provide a framework for assessing consent applications with the aim of ensuring high quality and consistent decisions.

The study has four sections:

- A brief history of Thorndon
- Analysis of changes in District Plan provisions and development pressures
- Analysis of the existing context of Thorndon and its change through time including:
 - Setting
 - Public realm
 - Built form and building typologies
 - Activity/land use
 - Demographics
- Analysis of neighbourhood characteristics including natural features, vegetation, infrastructure and the built environment.

The final document resulting from the study will not be a component of the district plan, but will inform the preparation of district plan provisions.

1.4 Objectives

Thorndon has a long history of settlement. Maori settlement was extensive and well established by the mid-nineteenth century when the first European settlers arrived in 1840. The oldest buildings in Thorndon date to within 10 to 15 years of the first arrivals. The suburb is one of the oldest in New Zealand, retaining the original street layout and some of the early dwellings still in their original context and on their original sites. The function of the suburb is similar to that which was planned in 1840. It is close to the governance and commercial centre of the city and provides accommodation for people working at the commercial centre of the region.

The study objectives are to:

- Provide a background analysis of the context and built form of the suburb which will inform the direction of the place-based study and future management decisions
- Identify the current features and characteristics of the different discrete neighbourhoods within the suburb
- Identify the desired future character of the neighbourhoods within the suburb
- Develop a model which will inform preparation of district plan provisions and development of workable, achievable rules.

1.5 Project Approach

A place based approach involves the assessment of the existing character of a location. Character is what makes areas of the city special and distinct. Factors that create character vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. It includes physical issues such as the environment, topography, use or height and density of buildings of an area. It also includes social issues such as the demographic composition of the community living there and cultural issues such as the heritage of the district.

In Thorndon, the character is strongly associated and influenced by its historic origins and settlement firstly by Maori and latterly by European settlers. This settlement has been derived from the shape of the land which has influenced the open and built spaces including street pattern and the distance between dwellings. The area contains a collection of Victorian and Edwardian housing set amidst a wider collection of nationally and locally significant heritage buildings and a wide diversity of architectural styles and ages. Experiencing Thorndon on the ground, helps with understanding how buildings, spaces and society interact and create the details that can add or detract from the neighbourhood's character.

Consideration will be given to the geographical area, built environment, vegetation and communities of interest within the suburb. It will also consider the wider context of Thorndon and interactions between the inner residential areas of Thorndon and the adjacent commercial areas of the central city. The context, both social and physical, is important and has impacted on the evolution of the suburb since settlement in the 1840s.

Development has been closely linked to the growth of the governance and commercial centres of the city, the harbour and routes into and out of the city.

The study will include a fine-grained analysis of discrete neighbourhoods within Thorndon. The features which contribute to the character of the area, including the topography, context, infrastructure, vegetation and buildings will be included. The analysis of the neighbourhood will include input from the local community. The aim is to arrive at district plan provisions through a collaborative and inclusive process of discussion and engagement with the community. It is anticipated that the regulatory solutions or provisions, will be fit for purpose in the suburb.

1.6 Community Engagement and Consultation

The initial consultation on the Thorndon Heritage project was an integral part of the consultation with the community on the draft residential and suburban centres plan change (Plan Change 72) from December 2008 to April 2009. Due to high levels of interest in the Thorndon Heritage Project, the consultation timeframe for Thorndon was extended. Between the end of the first consultation in April 2009 and August 2010, a range of different community engagement processes were used to gather information to assist Council to make decisions about the future District Plan provisions for the suburb.

At the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting of 5 August 2010, Council resolved to undertake further work to develop a package of measures to address heritage issues in Thorndon. These included a place-based study for the suburb.

1 Introduction

As a component of the development of the place-based plan, to ensure communication with individuals and community groups in Thorndon, a Thorndon Advisory Group was established. The members of the advisory group included two architects and representatives from the following Thorndon-based organisations: Katherine Mansfield Birthplace Trust, Lilburn Residence Trust, Randell Cottage Writers Trust, Thorndon Residents Association, Thorndon Society, Thorndon Trust and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. The Terms of Reference for the advisory group identified their role as being the interface between their members, the wider community and council officers working on preparing the place based study.

The wider community was consulted by way of informal engagement opportunities at the Hill Street Farmers Market. Letter drops to the all residents and ratepayers in the Thorndon during the engagement and consultation process ensured that all residents and ratepayers knew about the possible engagement opportunities and opportunities to have input.

1.7 Structure of the Report

The study addresses the following issues:

1.7.1 History of the Development of Thorndon

An overview of the history of the suburb provides a basis from which to understand how and why the suburb has developed from before the European settlement of the 1840s until the present day. The presence of a major Maori habitation area was a key to where the 1840 settlers decided to build their first dwellings and

public buildings. To this day the development of the governance and commercial area of Wellington is affecting the continuing development of the residential areas of Thorndon.

1.7.2 Context and Setting of the Study Area

Information was gathered and collated which clarifies the geographical, social, historical and demographic attributes of the suburb. The setting, public realm, built form, and land-use were reviewed.

1.7.3 Analysis of change through time and pressures for change

The changes in planning rules since the 1970s were reviewed. Resource and building consents from the past 15 years were also analysed. This information helped to determine the extent of change through time and the impact of change on the character of the area.

1.7.4 Demographic Trends

Demographic analysis provides insights into the links between the size of the population and growth and distribution, and the cultural, economic, geographic, and other social attributes present in the area. It is useful in describing the population in the suburb and may assist with making predictions about the future needs of the people who live there.

1.7.5 Neighbourhood Character

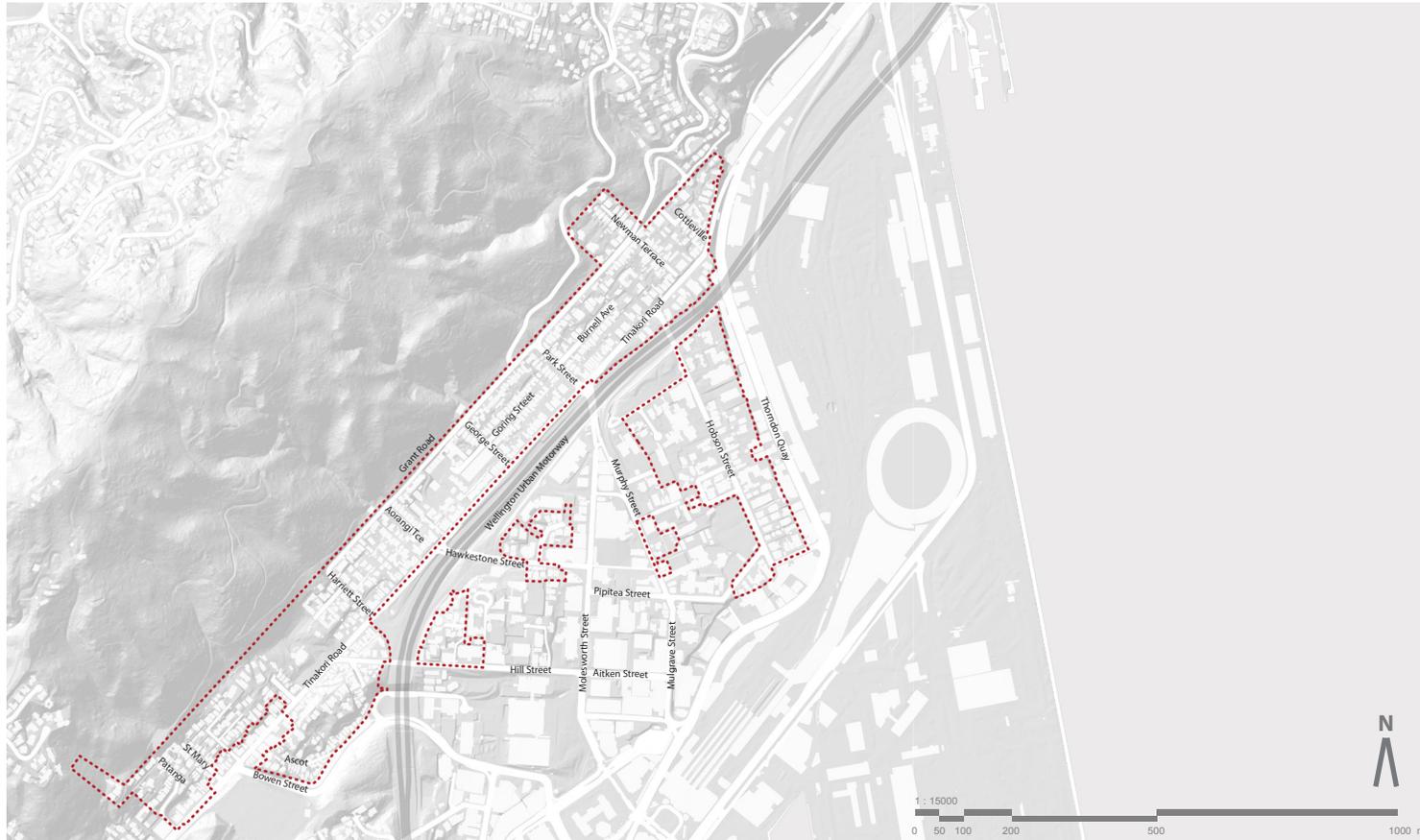
Determining the primary character of the various neighbourhoods in the suburb involved an analysis of the features or characteristics of neighbourhoods within Thorndon. The character neighbourhoods were identified during visits to the suburb and by assessing the

background context. Twelve discrete neighbourhoods were identified each with distinct values. Although some are similar, they are considered separately to ensure that an acceptable level of information is available to assist with management in the future. The objective of the neighbourhood analysis was to provide information which is effectively a snap shot of a point in time from which to evaluate change. With the information collected it is anticipated that management of change will result in maintaining the character that the community enjoys while not preventing considerate and reasonable changes.

1.7.6 Design Guidelines

A model for developing design guidelines will be developed through discussion and engagement with community representatives. The development of design guidelines is outside the scope of this study but will be informed by this study.

2 Study Area



The study covers the part of the suburb of Thorndon which is zoned Inner Residential by the District Plan. It includes the long narrow strip of residential streets to the east of Tinakori Road at the base of Te Ahumairangi. It also includes the inner residential areas

of Hobson Street, Hobson Crescent, Fitzherbert Terrace, Portland Crescent and Selwyn Terrace. The area around Glenberrie Terrace, Ascot Street and Parliament Street are not included in the study. The Tinakori Road suburban centre is not included.

3 Thorndon History

3.1 In the beginning... landscape and topography

The suburb is dominated by the long ridge of Te Ahumairangi Hill. Early accounts of Maori settlement in the area now known as Thorndon record that there were extensive cultivations along the base of the hill and the flat land running down to the harbour. The hill was covered in vegetation and was an important food gathering area.

Subsequent to European settlement, large areas were cleared for farming before being planted in exotic species in the 1930s. In the last few years wide areas of exotic plantings have been cleared. Native species have been planted which is regenerating the hill and providing an appearance of mixed vegetation, probably reminiscent of the land cover experienced by settlers in the 19th century.

“The Wellington earthquake fault line follows the line of the base of Te Ahumairangi. Of historic interest is the observation that a number of minor streets have sections of roading aligned parallel to, and between, Tinakori and Grant Roads (the central dog-leg in Cottleville Terrace, Burnell Avenue, Goring Street, Little George Street). There are similar alignments south-west of Harriett Street (Pitarua St, Upper Lewisville, upper Patanga Crescent). These sections of roading were probably formed on local topographic highs or topographic benches, attractive to road construction in the early years of the establishment of Wellington. These topographic features are interpreted as being indicative of the fault location, and the roads may very well have been constructed unwittingly over or

adjacent to the fault trace. Support for this suggestion comes from the alignment with the other indicators of the Wellington fault.”

N.D. Perrin & P.R. Wood. Defining the Wellington Fault within the Urban Area of Wellington City. Wellington City Council, 2003.

3.2 Maori Heritage

The following is an extract from the paper “The Historic Context and Heritage Values of Thorndon” by Louise Ormsby, an unpublished Wellington City Council report from 2009.

The history of Pipitea and Thorndon is a microcosm of Maori experience over the past 200 years. Both suburbs are important areas for Te Ati Awa. The pa, kainga and cultivations have been built over and buried beneath reclamations. Early accounts record that Pipitea/Thorndon was a seasonal food gathering site. By 1835, Te Matehou, a hapu of Te Ati Awa migrants from Taranaki, had permanent cultivations and four kainga in the area. Pipitea Pa was the leading settlement with its centre near present day Pipitea Marae.

Te Ati Awa historians have established that cultivations existed in the vicinity of Thorndon Supermarket, Hawkestone Street, Kate Sheppard Place and Harriet Street. The area which is now Fitzherbert Terrace was a noted bird snaring site. Extensive cultivations existed on the slopes of Te Ahumairangi Hill.

After initially supporting Pakeha settlement and the opportunities it brought for trade, Te Ati Awa became disillusioned. Serious misunderstanding over the New Zealand Company land purchases and the increasing pressure from settlers forced them out. Their

3 Thorndon History

rights and interests in the area were acknowledged in the Treaty settlement of 2007.

3.3 Early European Settlement

Thorndon is one of New Zealand's oldest residential suburbs. As part of the first planned settlement in New Zealand, many of its colonists were the New Zealand Company elite. They were progressive individuals and families with some means.

As a result Thorndon became the official centre of Wellington and since 1865 has been the site of Parliament. This has led to many notable New Zealanders living and working in the area and to events of national significance taking place within its boundaries.

Parts of Thorndon, because of steep terrain, have architecture and street scapes not found in other parts of New Zealand. The social divisions the 19th century can be seen in the workers' cottages on the slopes in the south and the large villas on the flat land to the north. This division, and the materials, design and scale of the surviving houses and buildings, give an immediate insight into how our forebears lived and worked. The buildings provide diverse examples of architectural style and the work of individual architects.

They also enhance the collections of the cultural and official institutions in the area. The history of Pipitea and Thorndon has been documented in images, publications and manuscripts held in the National Library, Alexander Turnbull Library, Archives New Zealand and the Parliamentary Library. The proximity of these institutions to the surviving housing and streetscapes provides an opportunity unique in New Zealand to get a comprehensive view of

the early history of the area.

From first settlement Thorndon had schools and churches. These developed with the city and are now major institutions. In conjunction with the residential areas of the suburb, and the surviving public houses and commercial buildings, they give insight into how Thorndon and the city have functioned as a community.

3.4 Growth and decline of the suburb

Until the move of Parliament to Wellington in 1865 Thorndon's development was slow. A dramatic change took place in New Zealand when in 1870s Premier Julius Vogel initiated a vigorous program of sponsored immigration and public works. Thorndon became the terminus for two important railways lines. Town acres were subdivided to build housing for immigrants and railway workers.

At this point the pattern of smaller dwellings clustered at the south of the suburb and larger dwellings to the north began to emerge. The growth of pastoral farming, improved transport and the invention of refrigeration led to a surge in prosperity by the turn of the century. Successful merchant and farming families built substantial homes designed by leading architects. From 1890 to the 1920s, the suburb was considered the heart of Wellington – its social, political, professional and commercial nucleus.

Many of the houses in Thorndon have been occupied by notable writers, painters, musicians, scholars, scientists, politicians, public servants and others. The writer, Celia Manson, referred to Thorndon as "a nest of singing birds".

By the mid 20th century the area had declined from Edwardian prosperity to inner city slum. Improved transport and Government housing policies were among the factors which encouraged a move to outer suburbs. Thorndon became an area of cheap accommodation and many large homes became hostels and boarding houses.

3.5. Motorway to now

In 1961 Thorndon was chosen as the route for the Wellington Urban Motorway. The resulting destruction of large areas of the Bolton Street Cemetery and some 400 houses led to awareness of the value of the neighbourhood's heritage.

World events came to the rescue of Thorndon when the oil shocks of the 1970s made inner city suburbs sought after locations again. By 1976 the work of the Thorndon Society had led to an area of Thorndon being zoned to protect the area's special heritage character. This was the Thorndon E Zone, the precursor to the current Character Area around Ascot Street, Glenbervie Terrace and Parliament Street.

The preparation of the Thorndon place based study is a continuation of the discussion regarding planning provisions which will ensure that the suburb's special character is managed into the future.

A timeline of the settlement and development of Thorndon from the Maori settlements at Pipitea through European settlement until the present time can be found in Section 5.1.3.

4 District Plan Provisions and Development Pressures

4.1 Review of District Plan Provisions for Thorndon

Planning provisions for Thorndon have changed markedly over the past 40 years, reflecting the changing views and aspirations of councils and communities over time. The results of the different planning provisions can be seen in the Thorndon of today.

The following is a brief overview of the planning history of Thorndon. This history clearly demonstrates how opinion about the management of inner residential suburbs and their values has changed through time.

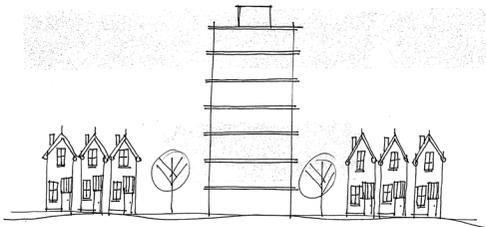
4.1.1 First District Scheme under Town and Country Planning Act -1970s

Aims:

- Renewal of old inner-city housing
- Replacement by high density and high rise
- Amalgamation of small sites.

Methods:

- High-rise multi-unit buildings a permitted activity
- Single houses required planning consent.



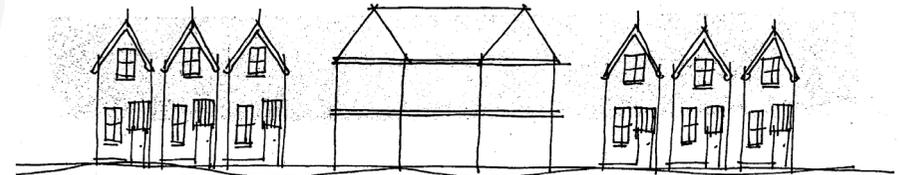
4.1.2 Reviewed District Scheme - 1980s

Aims:

- Relatively high density
- High-rise limited to specific locations
- Retention of existing housing stock.

Methods:

- Houses and multi-unit developments a permitted activity
- Building height generally 10m
- Redevelopment of small sites permitted;
- Recognition of “special areas” like Thorndon’s Historic “E” zone (Ascot St / Glenbervie Tce).



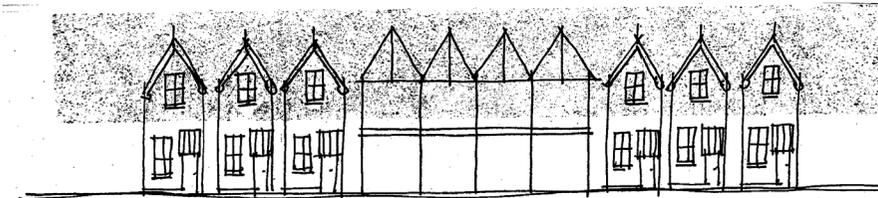
4.1.3 First District Plan under Resource Management Act - early 1990s

Aims:

- Containment of urban growth
- Redevelopment / infill encouraged
- Establishment of standardised rules for “bulk and location” for all inner residential areas, including Thorndon
- Maintain special character of identified residential areas.

Methods:

- New houses a permitted activity
- Building height generally 10 metres
- Multi-unit development requires a resource consent for design and appearance
- Application of design guides in special areas e.g. Thorndon Character Area.



4.1.4 Variation 14 - 1999

Following the introduction of the first District Plan, a variation was made that addressed the special character of a number of inner residential areas, including Thorndon.

Aims:

- Better protection of existing inner city housing stock
- Better protection of character of inner city residential areas.

Methods:

- Introduction of a rule to control demolition of pre-1930s houses in identified areas, including much of Thorndon.

4.1.5 Plan Change 72 - 2009

Aims:

- Better protection and management of the character of all inner city residential areas.

Methods:

- Amendments to the existing rule to control demolition of pre-1930s houses to also control the removal of architectural features on street frontages
- Improvements to the policies which support the pre-1930s demolition rule.

4 District Plan Provisions and Development Pressures

4.1.6 Application of the Rules

Pre-1930 Demolition Rule:

- Consent required to demolish any building (excluding accessory buildings) built before 1930. This currently applies to much of Thorndon.
- Under Plan Change 72, consent is also required for the removal or demolition of architectural features from the primary elevation. Consent is not required to reinstate original design features.

4.1.7 Thorndon Character Area

This currently covers Thorndon suburban centre and immediate residential area.

- Consent required for the total or partial demolition or removal of any building built before 1930.
- Consent required for the construction, alteration of, and addition to residential buildings, accessory buildings and residential structures.

4.2 Review of Development Pressures in Thorndon's Inner Residential zone

4.2.1 Thorndon Building Consents 1993 - 2010

This time-span was assessed as the Council's computerised database was established in 1993, making the information better suited for detailed analysis.

Building Consent applications are useful in that they are one of the most accessible data-sets available for analysis to provide an understanding of development pressures in Thorndon.

This is primarily because in the majority of the study area most development does not require an application for resource consent to undertake alterations, whereas building consents are required for a wide range of work. Resource Consents are required for specific developments, additions or alterations that do not comply with permitted activities within the District Plan. The resource consent information collected by the database provides limited information regarding the scope and detail of the proposed development, in contrast with the greater amount of data required for a building consent.

There are some restrictions on what can be revealed through building consent data analysis. The study relates to all building consent applications as submitted. Applications that were refused or not constructed are counted alongside those approved and constructed. Equally, works carried out without building consent are not available. The records span 17 years and over time the level of information saved has increased. This has resulted in some fields of information being categorized as "unknown". In total, 37% of all applications do

not provide sufficient information to be able to be fully understood. Approximately 32% of all applications are for internal work, fireplaces, repiling, drainage and plumbing and are not for work that would impact upon the character of Thorndon.

4.2.2 Trends identified by building consent analysis

In line with the study area's mainly residential character, most applications relate to residential properties. Other areas where non-residential developments may well have an impact greater than their numbers may suggest are the redevelopment of school sites and the security measures taken by foreign embassies evident by applications for upgraded walls and fencing. The adverse impact which the latter may have on the street scene may be greater than the numbers alone may at first suggest.

Residential changes are focused around several key issues.

- Car ownership is clearly an issue in the suburb and leaves its impact in the form of 51 applications for new garages, car ports and car parks.
- 41 applications for decks includes those constructed for car parking.
- House extension applications are relatively high and represent a cumulative impact within the study area that could have significant implications for the character of the suburb if carried out insensitively.
- At least 29 applications involve windows, an area of change

where ill-suited designs can have a negative impact on the street frontage.

On average, around 13 residential alterations a year which may impact upon the character of the study area are the subject of applications for building consent.

4 District Plan Provisions and Development Pressures

4.3 District Plan Heritage List Provisions in Thorndon



The items marked on the map above include heritage buildings and objects, and sites of significance to Tangata Whenua or other Maori. heritage values have been recognised by provisions in Chapter 21 of the District Plan.

Heritage Objects

18	Grant Road Spring	Grant Road
19	Nathan Memorial c.1941	Grant Road

Sites of significance to Tangata Whenua or other Maori

M59	Pa-kuao Kainga
M61	Tiakiwai Stream locality

Heritage Buildings

045	'Pendennis' c.1890s	13-17	Burnell Avenue
046	House 1910	22	Burnell Avenue
133	The Wedge 1906	20	Glenbervie Terrace
134	The Moorings 1905	31	Glenbervie Terrace
137	Italian Embassy 1877	36-38	Grant Road
147	Queen Margaret College Tower Building 1876	53	Hobson Street
225	Thorndon Fire Station 1898	12	Murphy Street
248	'The Anchorage' 1890	31	Patanga Crescent
265	Three Cottages c.1870	5A-C	St Mary Street

276	Old St Paul's Schoolroom 1897	4-14	Turnbull Street
277	Rita Angus Cottage 1877	194A	Sydney Street West
303	House 1895	9	Tinakori Road
304	Houses 1902	10-12	Tinakori Road
305	Katherine Mansfield Birthplace 1887	25	Tinakori Road
306	Beere House 1908	32	Tinakori Road
307	Shamrock Hotel 1893	224	Tinakori Road
308	Prime Minister's Residence 1862-73	260	Tinakori Road
309	House c.1890s	292	Tinakori Road
407	'Taikiwai' c.1870	6	Stowe Hill
413	Building 1883	100	Hobson Street
422	Lilburn House, shed and garden 1951	22	Ascot Street
451	Randell Cottage c.1876-77	14	St Mary Street

5 Existing Context

5.0.1 Wellington City in a Regional Context

The topography of the Wellington Region is dramatic and the city is located on one of the few relatively flat areas between the rugged southern coast and the steep Orongorongo Range.

Settlement extends from the Miramar Peninsula, across the Kilbirnie isthmus and fills the basin formed by the steep hills that enclose the harbour. Settlement is limited along the straight western edge of the harbour due to the steepness of the slopes there but starts again on the flat ground of the Hutt River delta.

The straight side of the harbour clearly shows the active geological fault line. From Thorndon, the fault extends north along Hutt Road, right through to the Bay of Plenty. It also runs south along Tinakori Road at the base of Te Ahumairangi Ridge all the way through Cook Strait to the South Island. The network of primary and secondary faults are the reason for such prominent ridgelines in Wellington's landscape.



5.0.2 Thorndon in the Context of Wellington

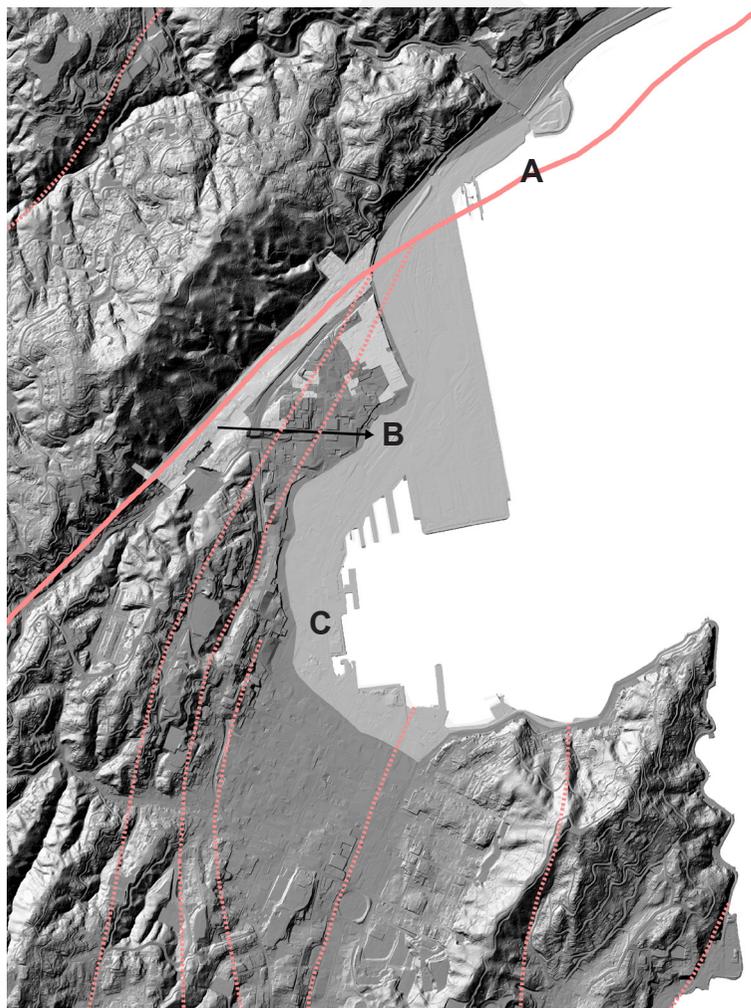
Thorndon is a highly modified landscape and is not naturally flat. The valley that marks the Wellington Fault (A), formerly continued north along what is now Tinakori Road. The spur the Botanic Gardens sits upon also continued further north but in the early 1900s it was cut to allow trams into Thorndon along Bowen Street. A valley running west to east down Hawkstone Street (B) was also filled in. Steady reclamation (C) into Wellington Harbour has separated Thorndon from the coast.

Manuka, flax and fern covered the flatter areas and podocarp/broadleaf forest covered the hills. Together the vegetation, plentiful birdlife and accessible kai moana provided enough protein to support a substantial Maori population.

European settlement of Thorndon began in 1840. It was one of the country's earliest suburbs and was established as part of a planned settlement by the New Zealand Company.

Currently, Thorndon is a mixed area containing, varied residential and business areas with many institutions that support Wellington's role as New Zealand's capital.

Thorndon is affected by primary and secondary fault lines of which early planners were unaware. It sits to the north of the CBD and is linked by three main roads, including the motorway.



5.1 Setting

5.1.1 Reading Wellington

The image to the right is a figure/ground diagram of Wellington where the open space is white and the built form is dark grey. Contour lines are shown in light grey. It shows the different densities arrangements of buildings across the city.

The large-scale patterns that emerge show Thorndon is part of the urban fabric that makes up the fringe of the CBD. It also shows Thorndon has a low density, common among the other low scale, inner-residential suburbs.

While Thorndon is laid out orthogonally, it is on a different axis to the central area as a response to the topography.

The compact urban form of the CBD differentiates it from the inner-residential areas. A lot of the large open spaces, such as the green belt, are on steep slopes and the reclaimed land of Pipitea is used for large-scale, infrastructural and industrial purposes.

The next page outlines some smaller scale settlement patterns that allows us to understand more about Wellington's makeup and how Thorndon fits into it.



5.1.2 Figure/Ground Diagrams



Older residential streets form a tight pattern. The setbacks are regular and clearly define the street edge. Designed before the car, the blocks are small, enhancing the connectivity of the suburb. Many buildings are two storey with a backyard, making this a low density arrangement. Examples are in Mt Victoria, Te Aro and in Thorndon between Tinakori Road and Grant Road.



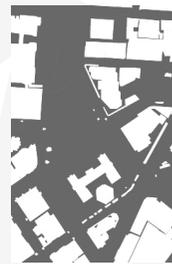
Curvilinear streets run horizontally across the slope with few streets connecting up the slope. Street layout was driven by the steep topography above the CBD. It was laid out after World War One when farm land was being subdivided and the tram provided access between the city and the suburbs. There are clear examples in Northland, Wilton and Hataitai.



The original shoreline ran along Thorndon Quay, Lambton Quay and Wakefield Street. When the city street grid meets these curved streets, the result is a series of triangular spaces and a deviation from the orthogonal grid. It gives Wellington a point of difference and adds to the city's sense of place.



Patterns like this result from spacious sections being subdivided. It is a diverse spatial arrangement with large areas of private open space and small areas of concentrated density. There is also large variation in setbacks along the streets. This diagram shows Hobson Street in Thorndon.



This diagram is an inverse of the others. It shows the space between buildings, most of which is part of the public realm. The public realm is the public space between private buildings including pavements, streets, squares and parks. Achieving a well connected, well used network of spaces is one of the principles of urban design.



Wellington has a compact CBD that is arranged in a grid of fine grain blocks with high density buildings. There are a series of lanes and minor streets which is fundamental to the diverse and pedestrian-friendly character of the city.

5.1 Setting

5.1.3 Street Development and Reclamation of Thorndon

Learning about the events and geographic limitations which affect the formation of a suburb helps develop an understanding of why a place has the character it does.

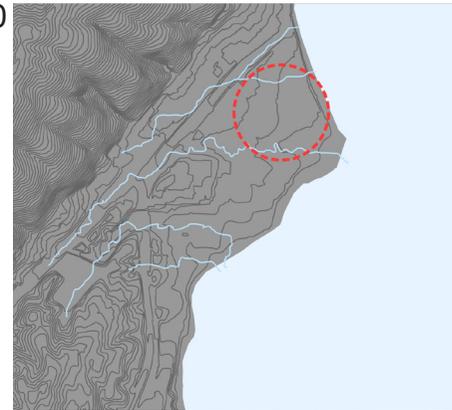
A clear way to show the changes over time is to look at the evolution of the street pattern.

The street pattern of an area is fundamental to its sense of place. It defines the orientation of the suburb and the block sizes within it. Once a street layout has been established, and invested in, it is unusual for it to change significantly.

In Thorndon's case the street layout was influenced firstly by the topography then by subdivision, reclamation and then the motorway.

This series uses the top images to show the street morphology of Thorndon. The white lines show the new streets. The dark grey lines represent the existing streets and light greys show the reclamation extending into Wellington Harbour. The images below accompany the diagrams and show how the actions played out on the ground.

1800



Circa 1843 : Charles Heaphy : Birdseye view of Port Nicholson. Sourced from Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z.

The area that became known as Thorndon was a desirable place to live because of the geography for Maori settlers.

The combination of a large flat area at the base of forested hills, multiple streams, an expansive view of the harbour and plentiful, accessible kia moana, made an attractive and successful location for a substantial Kiangā (indicated in red).

It was for these same reasons that European settlement occurred here.

1840



1860 : Pipitea Point prior to reclamation of 1876 along Thorndon Quay.

The first street plan of Thorndon was laid out by Mein Smith for the New Zealand Company in 1841.

The streets follow the topography and this explains why Thorndon is not laid out in a grid pattern.

Tinakori and Grant Road run along the base of Te Ahumairangi Hill and the roads follow the streams across Thorndon Flat. Thorndon Quay runs along the shoreline.

1915



1900 : The intersection of Murphy and Molesworth Steets is in the middle of the photo.

In the following 70 years most planned roads were built and many small roads were added to accommodate subdivision and new housing. Many additional streets were cul-de-sacs and did not increase the connectivity of the suburb.

Substantial reclamation meant residential Thorndon was no longer a coastal settlement. In 1872 rail lines were established which acted as a further barrier to the waterfront.

1970



1970 : Aerial showing the beginning of the construction of the motorway.

By 1970 the motorway was under construction.

The effects on Thorndon as a suburb were substantial. The motorway effectively cut Thorndon in two along the valley at the base of Te Ahumairangi Hill.

Reclamation continued to expand into Wellington Harbour.

2000



2011 : Present day Thorndon. Looking from the Botanical Gardens towards Kaiwharawhara.

Since the motorway no new roads have been established in Thorndon.

Even with subdivision and the addition of the motorway, the original street structure of Thorndon is still clearly evident.

A large area of land was reclaimed which allowed the port to expand and has distanced Thorndon from the shoreline.



1. Botanic Gardens



2. Te Ahumairangi Hill



3. Green pathway beside Wellington Urban Motorway



4. Katherine Mansfield Memorial Park



5. Frandi Street

5.2 Public Realm

The experience of a space is strongly influenced by how people and vehicles enter it. Clear entry points that signal a change in the community, use or purpose make spaces more defined and readable.

5.2.2 Gateways & Street Hierarchy in Thorndon



The major gateways are those that have a more direct connection between the two sides of Thorndon. The apartment towers on the western side of the motorway act as landmarks amongst the lower built form. They help people position themselves within Thorndon and in the wider context, they locate the suburb.



1. Victoria University



2. Wellington Parliament



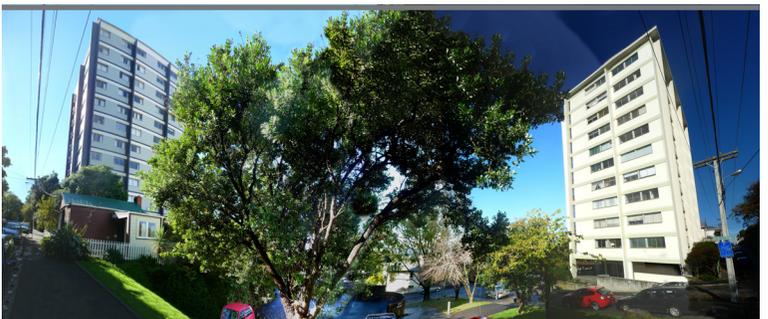
3. Premier House



4. Chinese Embassy



5. Birchington Court Flats



6. Grosvenor 19 Cottleville & Mansfield Towers

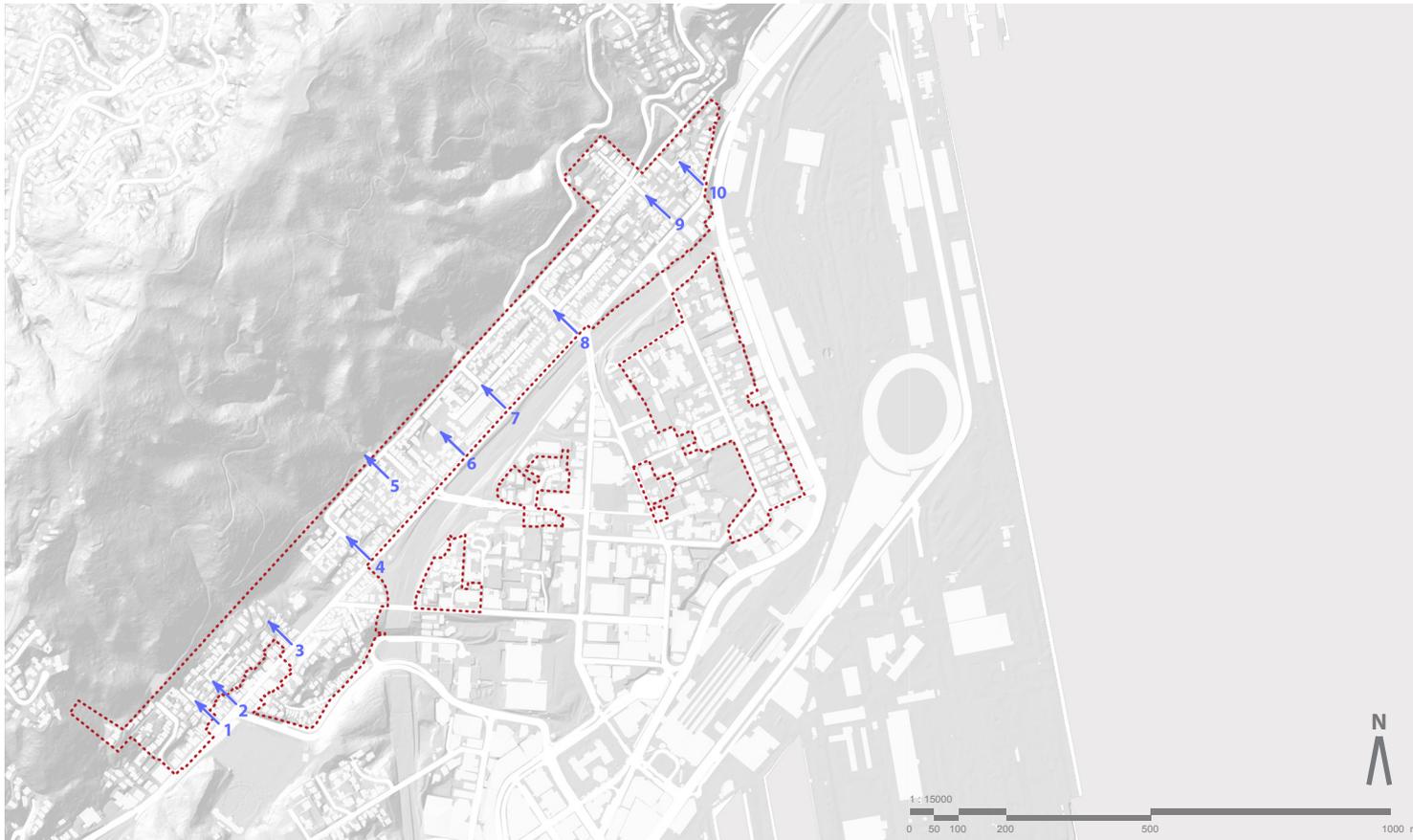


7. The bridge on Molesworth Street over the motorway

5.2 Public Realm

There are many viewshafts in Thorndon that are fundamental to its sense of place. They link the suburb into its context by extending lines of sight out to the harbour, the surrounding hills and other parts of the city. The more prominent views have been the focus of this study. They have been divided into four ordinal directions: north-west, south-west, north-east, south-east. These directions generally follow the street layout.

5.2.3 Viewshafts looking North-West



Viewshafts looking north-west from the western side of the motorway look on to Te Ahumairangi Hill. It is part of the Te Ahumairangi Ridge and part of Wellington's Green Belt.

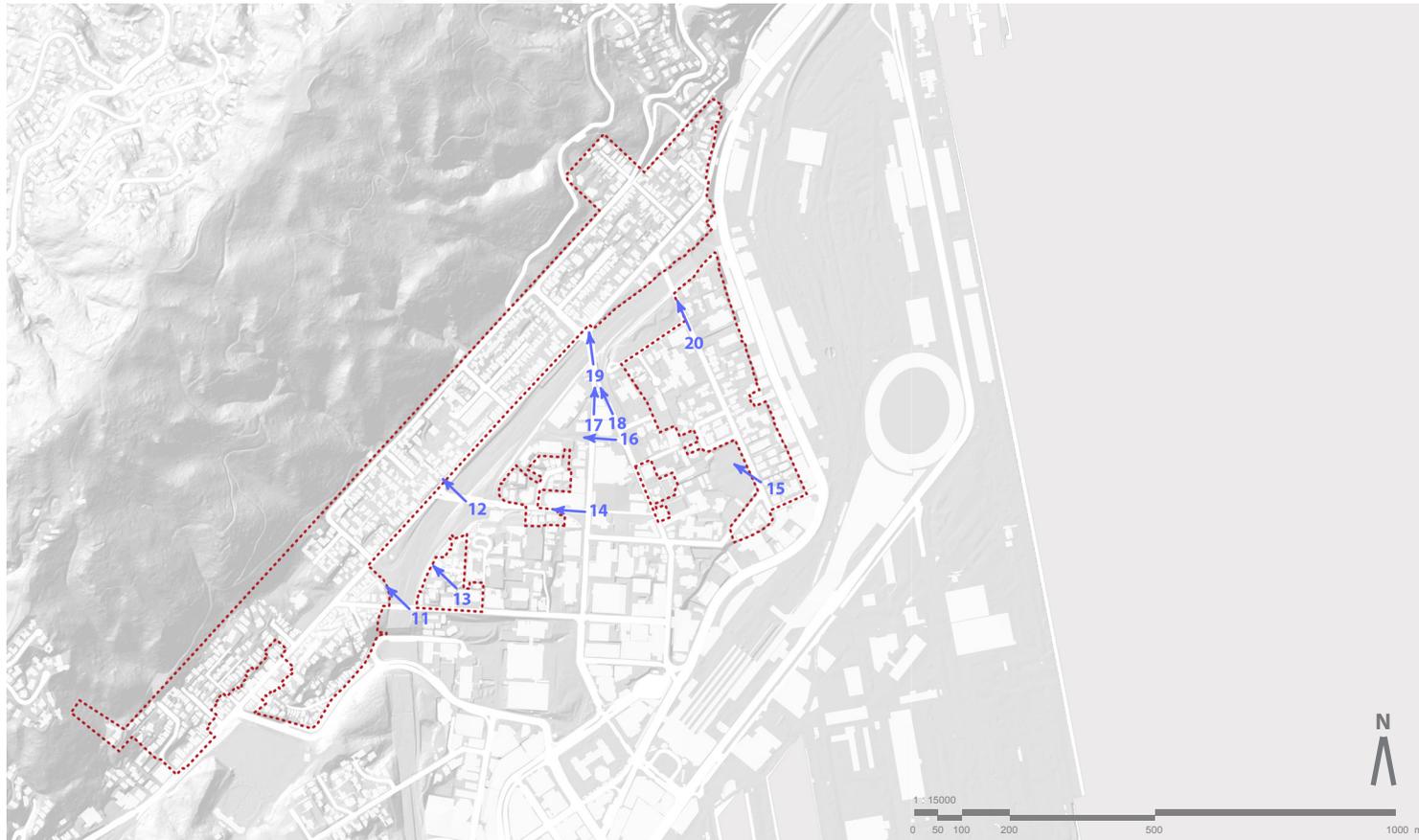
The views are predominantly focused on green vegetation on steep slopes. It gives Thorndon a sense of being a settlement nestled at the base of a hill.

The green belt contains and provides a clear edge to the suburb. At the same time it integrates with the planting on private land.



5.2 Public Realm

5.2.4 Viewshafts looking North-West



The views looking north-west from the eastern side of the motorway are similar in that they highlight the relationship between the city and the green belt. There is a pleasant proportion between Te Ahumairangi Hill and buildings below it. This area defines the junction between the clear formation of the residential blocks along Tinakori Road and the CBD.



11. Hill Street overbridge



12. Hawkestone Street overbridge



13. Selwyn Terrace



14. Hawkestone Street



15. Hobson Street



16. May Street



17. Molesworth Street



18. Murphy Street



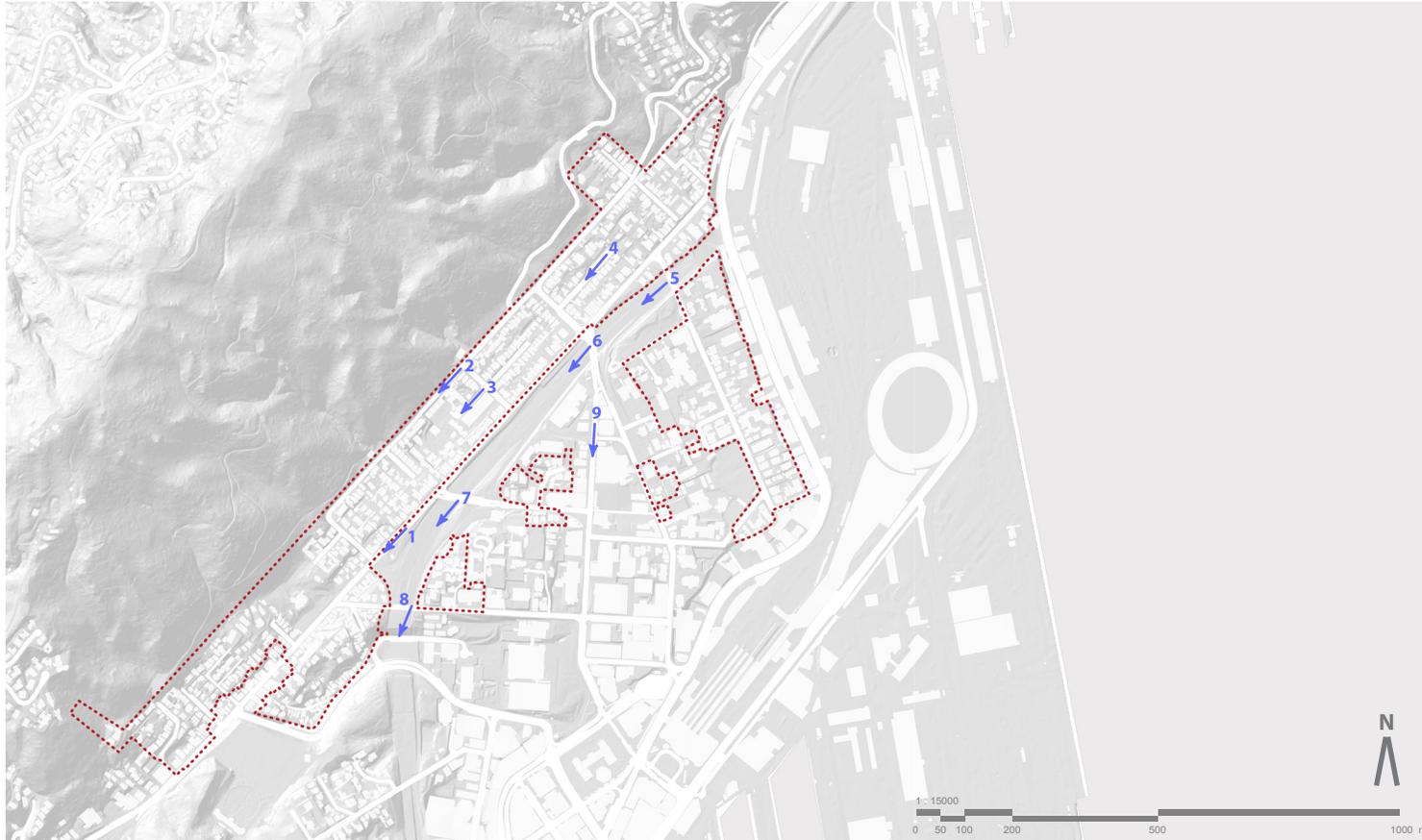
19. Molesworth & Murphy St intersection



20. Hobson Street

5.2 Public Realm

5.2.5 Viewshafts looking South-West



Views in the south-west direction are expansive and in many places extend all the way to the hills behind Wellington. This occurs not only along the motorway, but also down Grant Road, Little George Street and Burnell Avenue. Many views look over the motorway to the other half of Thorndon. These views highlight how physical access is limited to the four widely spaced overbridges. The visual connection is strong while the physical connection is restricted.



1. Tinakori Road



2. Grant Road



3. Little George Street



4. Burnell Avenue



5. Hobson Street overbridge



6. Molesworth Street overbridge



7. Hawkestone Street overbridge



8. Hill Street overbridge



9. Molesworth Street

5.2 Public Realm

5.2.6 Viewshafts looking North-East

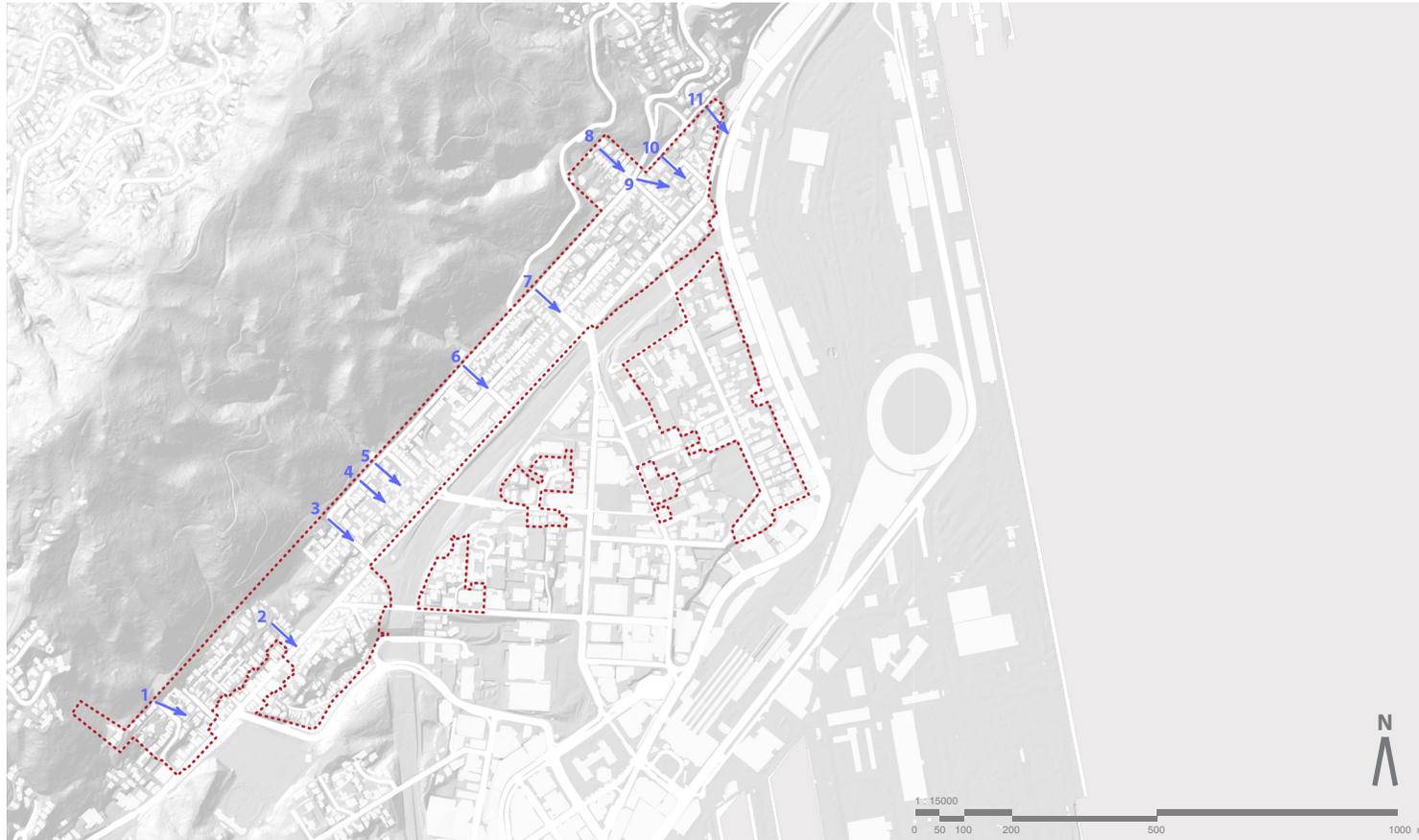


The views in this direction look towards the sea and over to hills of Kaiwharawhara. Views of the harbour are restricted to glimpses and the focus becomes the hills and the ridgelines. The hardness of the motorway is off-set by the height and scale of Te Ahumairangi Hill. It provides green relief from the heavy infrastructure.



5.2 Public Realm

5.2.7 Viewshafts looking South East



Views in this direction look over the city and between tall buildings. In some places they extend across the harbour, out to the Orongorongo Range. Views from higher vantage points are further away from the sea but because it is visible, these places also feel connected to the harbour. In places like Poplar Grove and Upton Terrace the views are of other parts of Thorndon which brings a sense of enclosure to the area.



1. View from the top of Patanga Crescent



2. Upton Terrace



3. Harriett Street



4. View from Grant Road



5. Poplar Grove



6. George Street



7. Park Street



8. Newman Terrace



9. View from Newman Terrace



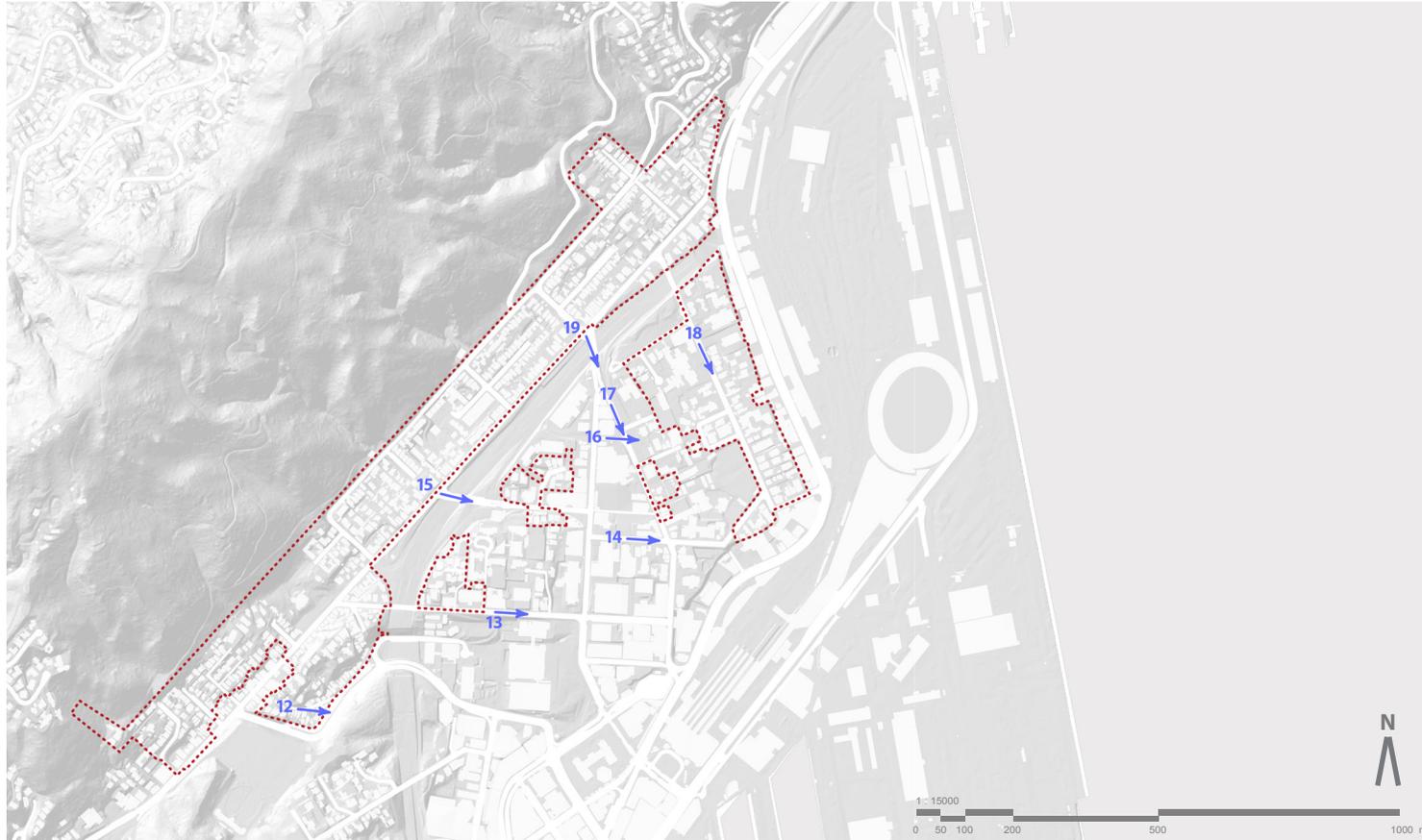
10. Cottleville Terrace



11. Frandi Street

5.2 Public Realm

5.2.8 Viewshafts looking South-East



Viewshafts in a south-eastern direction tend to look into the flatter area of Thorndon. In some places views pass through the city and reach the Orongorongo Range on the far side of the harbour. The width and alignment of streets and bridges governs the views and their extent.



12. Ascot Street



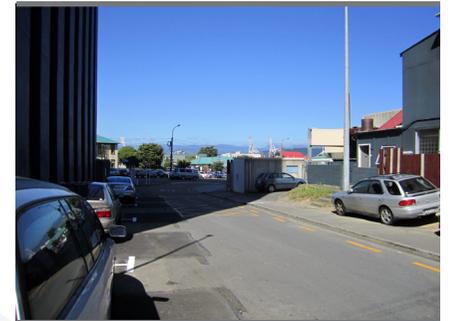
13. Hill Street



14. Pipitea Street



15. Hawkestone Street overbridge



16. May Street



17. Murphy Street



18. Hobson Street

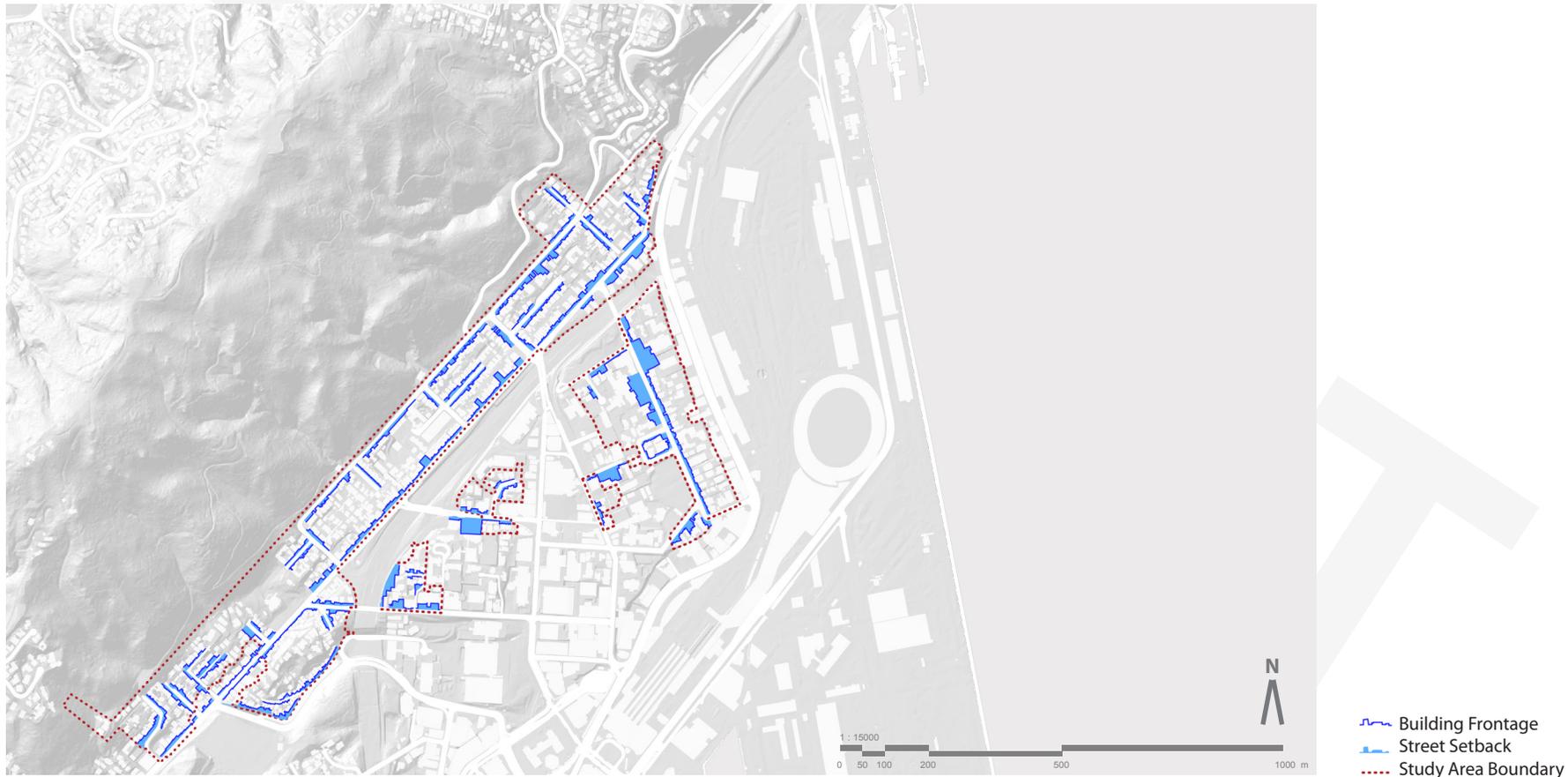


19. Molesworth Street overbridge

5.2 Public Realm

The public realm is greatly affected by street edges. Within Thorndon, the street edges are generally strongly defined in the orthogonal street grid and by the building frontages. The map below demonstrates that while setbacks vary across the whole study area, there is a strong pattern of consistent setbacks which vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

5.2.9 Building Frontage & Street Setbacks

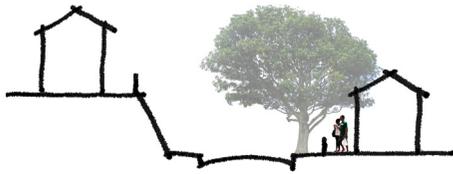


Consistency occurs particularly in the area to the west of Tinakori Road and north of Harriet Street. There is significant diversity of setbacks in the area to the west of Tinakori Road and south of Harriet Street.

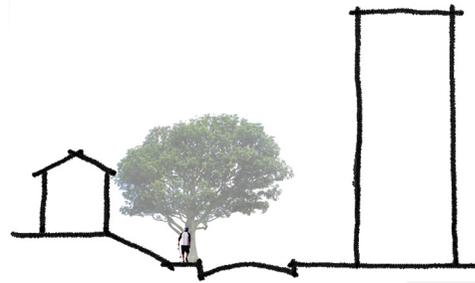
Trees typically play a secondary role in defining the street edge. The exception to this pattern is found in the steeply sloping areas at the south end of Thorndon, characterised by large trees or significant areas of vegetation, and also around the grand villas which are typically set in larger lots allowing for trees in their front and side yards.

Very narrow front yards with private gardens, often associated with low fencing, are a frequent feature adding significantly to the visual quality of the streetscape.

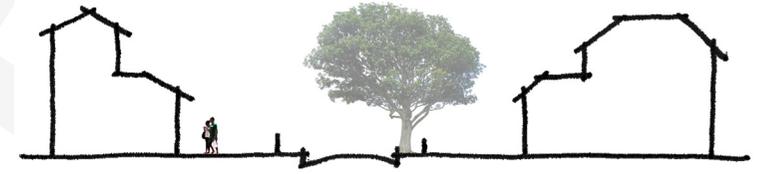
5.2.9.1 Common Setback Examples in the Thorndon Study Area



Setbacks at different levels on each side of the street.



The street edge defined by buildings of varying heights.



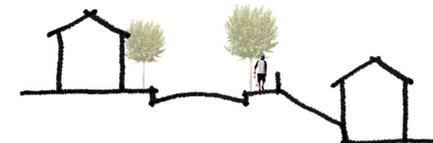
Large setbacks due to big front yards.



Narrow streets and footpaths with symmetrical building heights.



Wider streets and footpaths with symmetrical building heights.

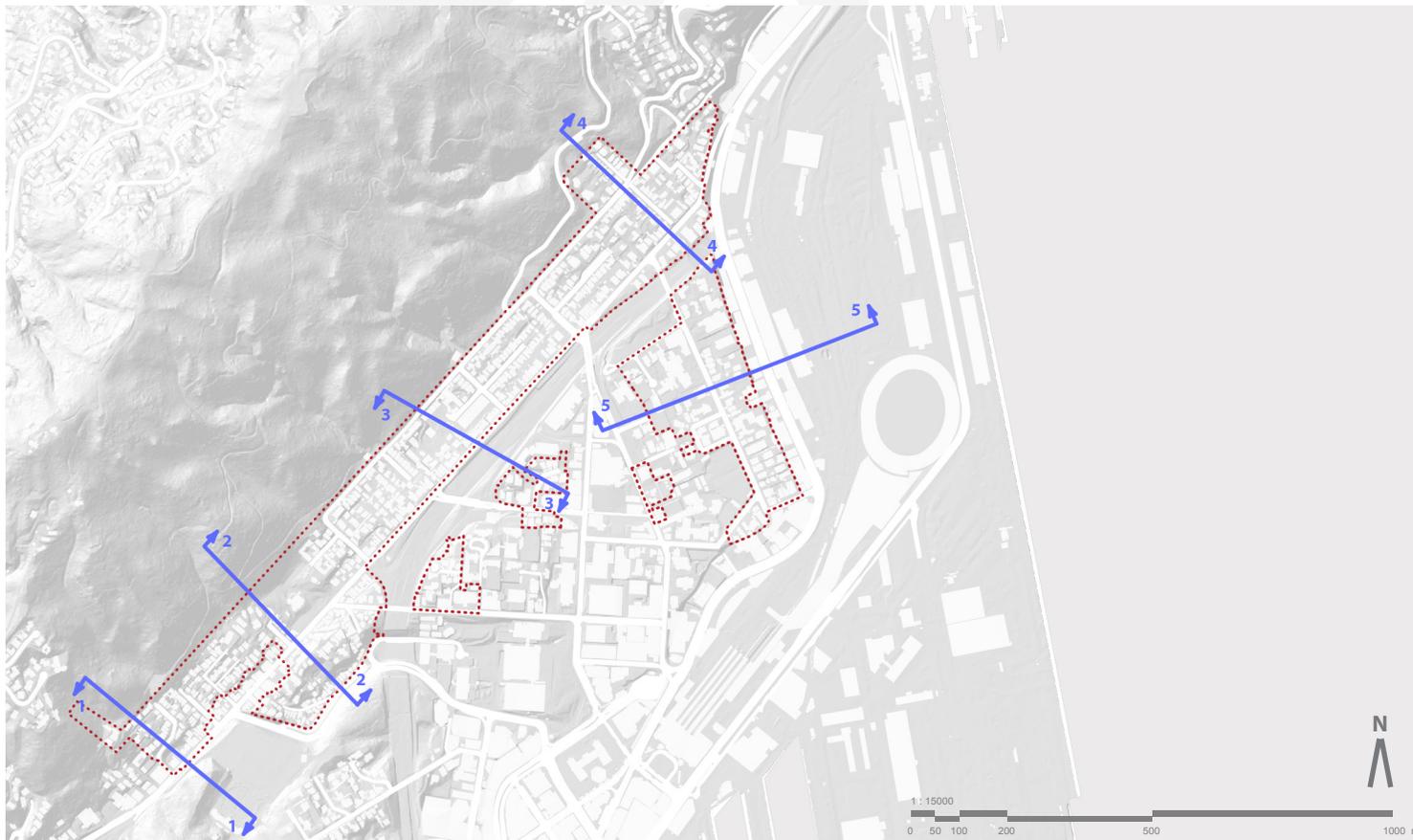


Setback below the street level.

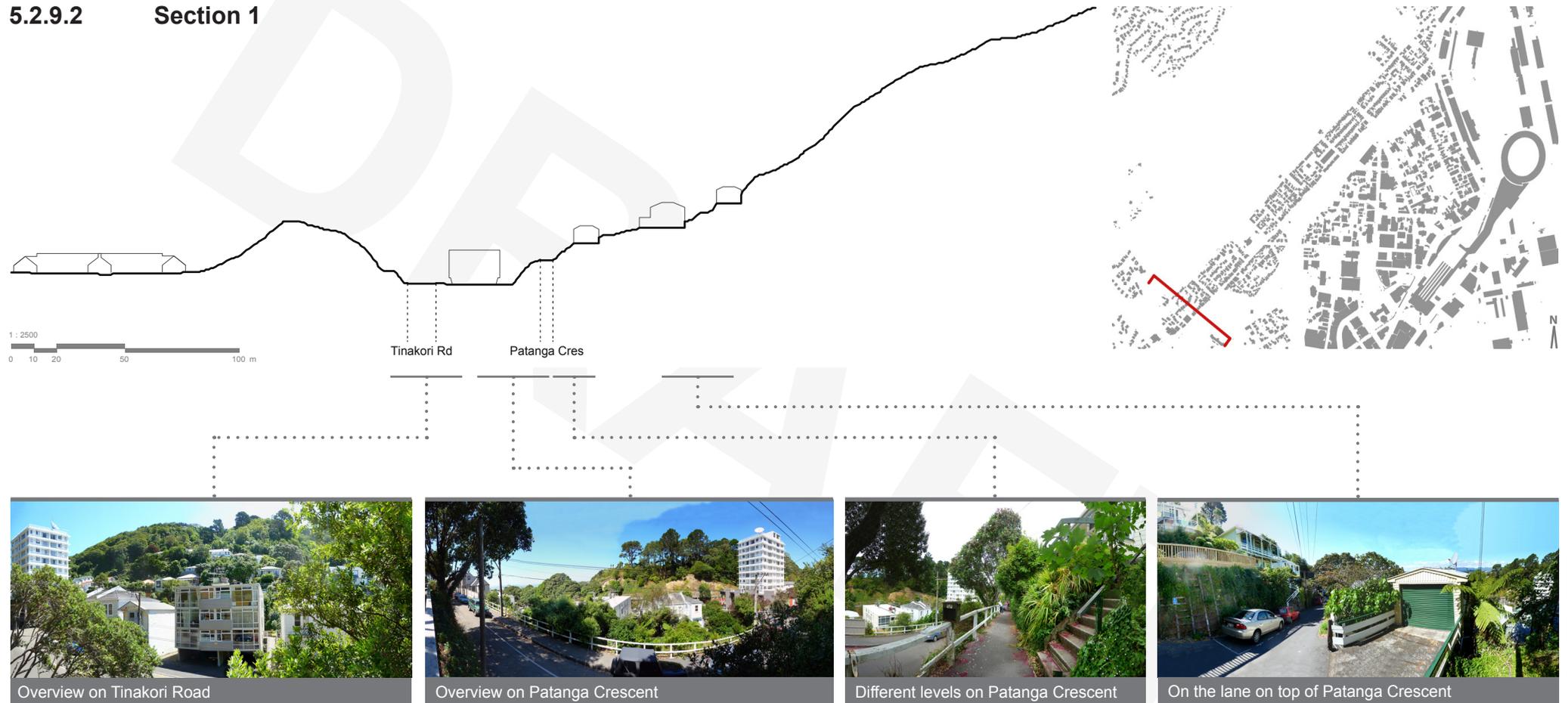
5.2 Public Realm

Taking sections through an area helps understand the relationships and proportions between the topography and the built form. They provide an insight into why different spaces feel the way do showing areas of enclosure and openness and the transitions between them.

The map below shows the location of five sections through Thorndon which will be looked at in more detail in the following pages.



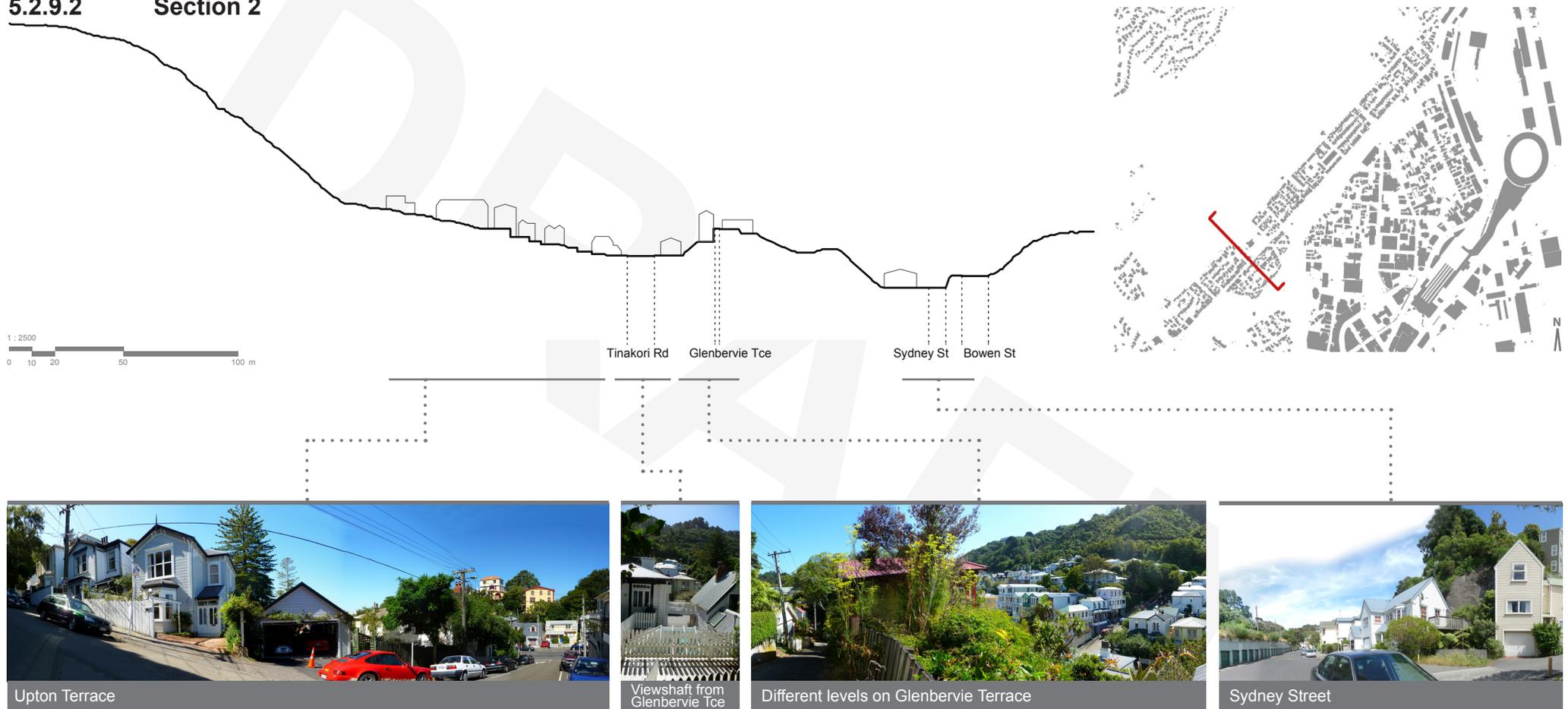
5.2.9.2 Section 1



This section shows how the buildings fit into the landscape. It explains why we can still read the topography of the suburb beneath the buildings. The landscape has many levels to it and the small buildings add to the character of the area while respecting context.

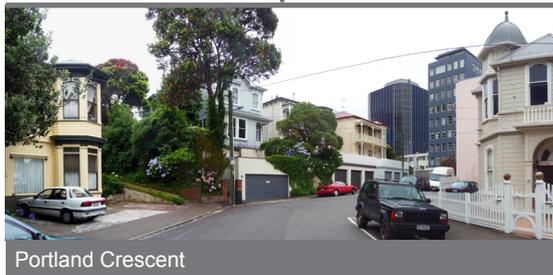
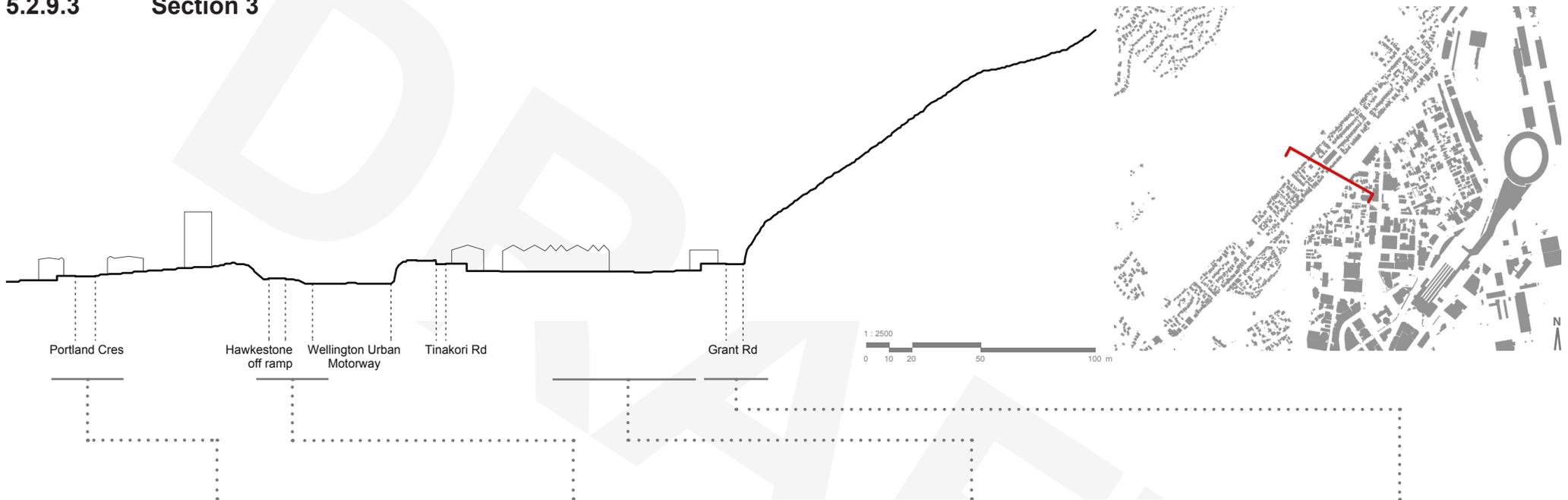
5.2 Public Realm

5.2.9.2 Section 2



This section shows how the spur that Glenberrie Terrace sits on has been incorporated into the plan of Thorndon. It provides the setting for a contained, close-knit neighbourhood with a strong sense of place that adds variation and value to Thorndon as a whole.

5.2.9.3 Section 3



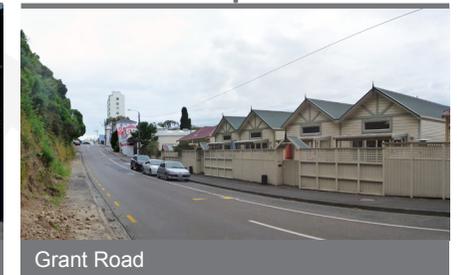
Portland Crescent



Hawkestone off ramp



Overview on Malcolm Lane

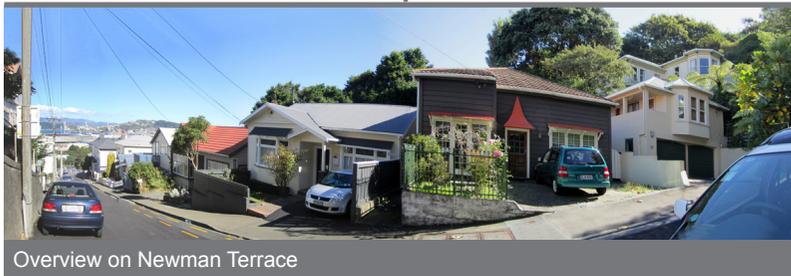
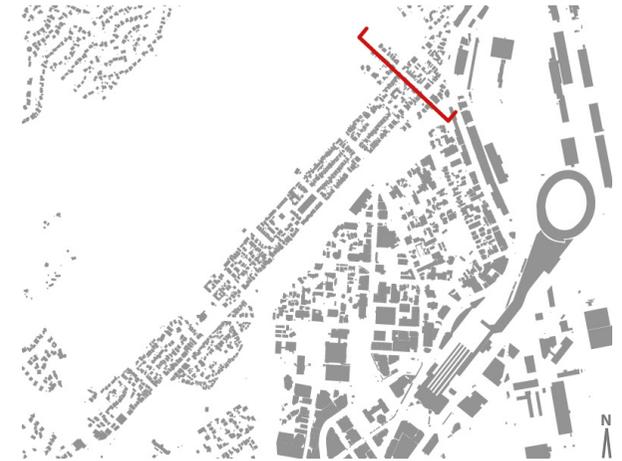
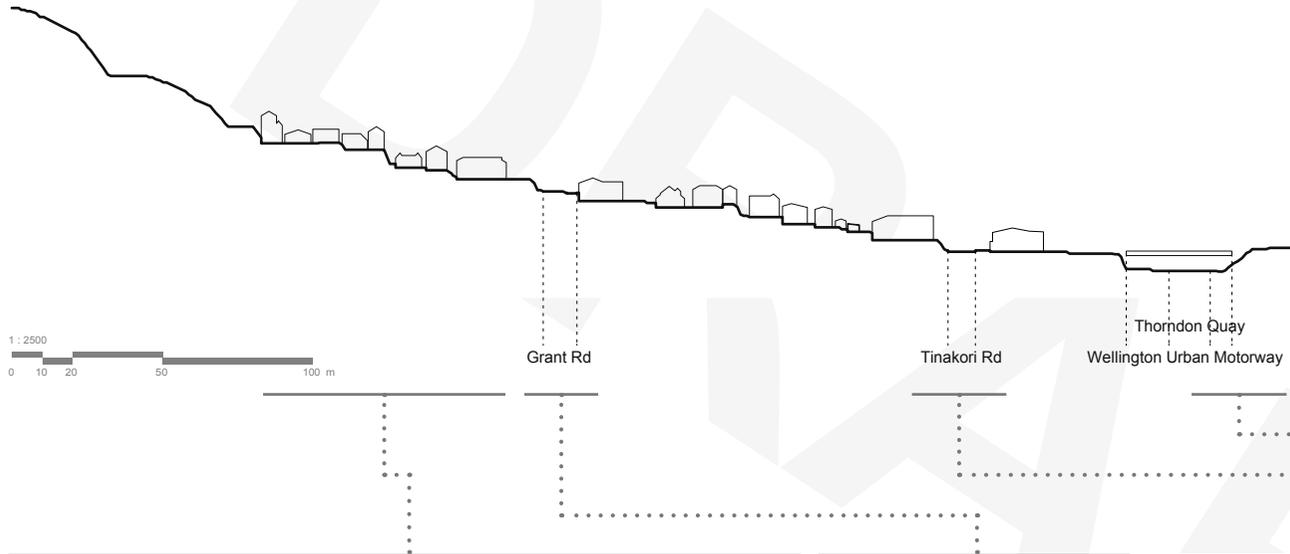


Grant Road

The section line taken across this part of Thorndon crosses many level changes. It shows the relative flatness of eastern Thorndon in comparison to the steepness of Te Ahumairangi Hill and that there is a dip between Tinakori Road and Grant Road which is not evident further south. It also shows the motorway as a wide trench close to residential buildings.

5.2 Public Realm

5.2.9.4 Section 4



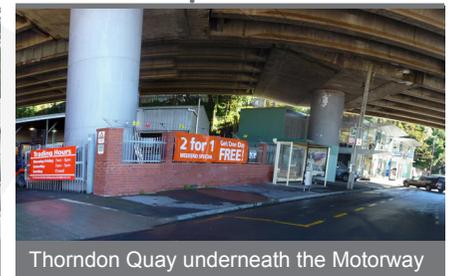
Overview on Newman Terrace



Different levels on Grant Road



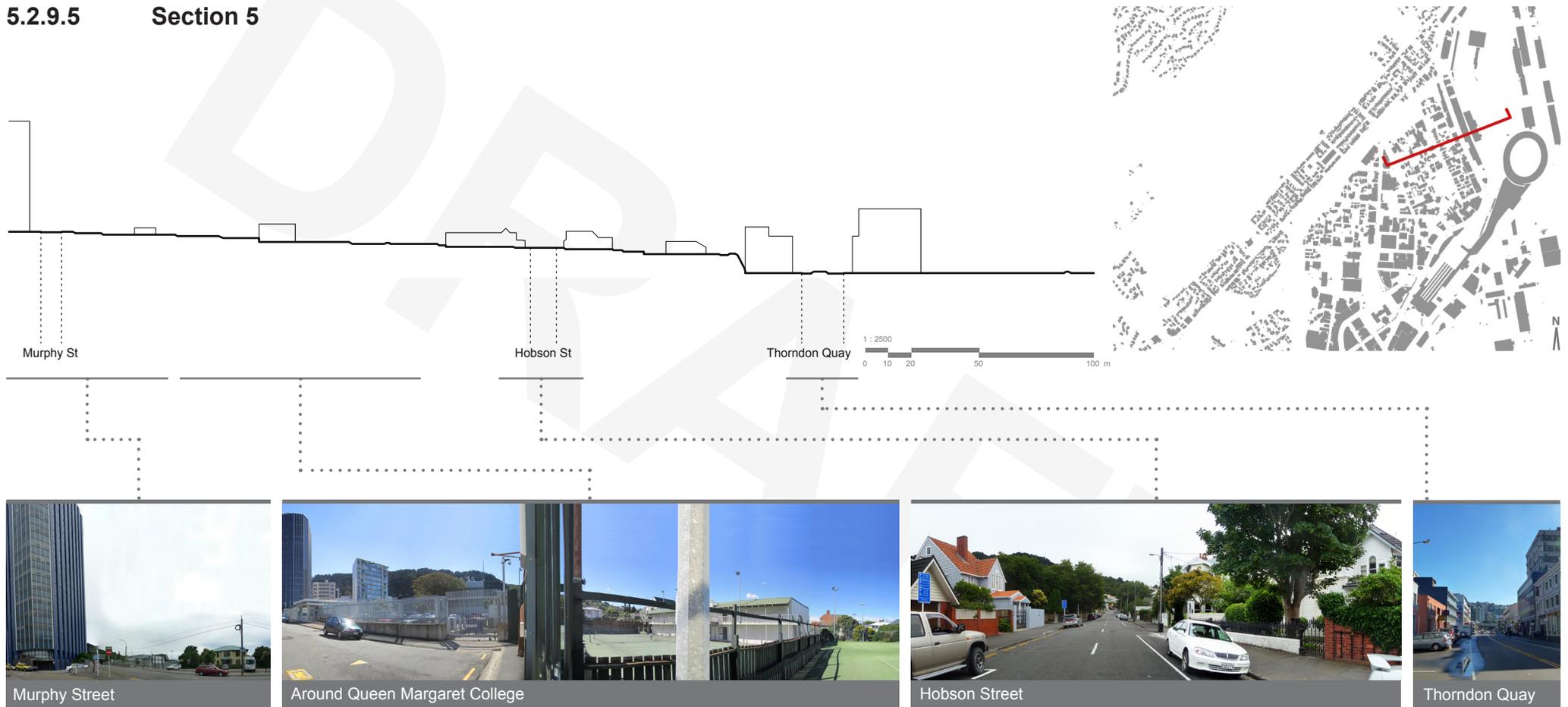
Tinakori Road



Thorndon Quay underneath the Motorway

In this section it is clear that Newman Terrace extends well beyond Grant Road and is the only street in the study area that continues into the Town Belt. The buildings are close together as they step up the slope. It shows the relationship between the green belt and how it merges with the city. The streets running along the valley are at decreasing levels, with Thorndon Quay at the lowest point.

5.2.9.5 Section 5



The buildings on this flatter area of Thorndon tend to be further apart and larger. There is a substantial level change between Hobson Street and Thorndon Quay which marks the difference between the original coastal cliff and the reclaimed land.

5.3 Built Form

5.3.1 Thorndon Architecture and Building Age

Early Settlement 1840 - 1870

Thorndon today still has an extraordinary collection of early cottages, dating from the first decades of European settlement through to the 1870s and later; some can be found around Ascot Street, but there are many other examples scattered along Tinakori Road and the small lanes running off it.

Houses of this early period are distinguished by simple forms, with gable roofs more common than hipped roofs. Some have verandahs across the front of the building, while others are of 'bay' form with a gable coming forward closing off the end of the verandah.

Cladding is generally plain lapped weatherboards, windows are double-hung and front doors are 4-panelled, sometimes with a fanlight above. Many of these buildings originally had roofs sheathed in split totara shingles; corrugated iron is now the universal covering.

Strong Growth 1870s

The 1870s saw very strong growth in inner city housing in Wellington, partly because of the expansion of the Government bureaucracy (following its shift from Auckland in 1865) and partly because of the economically prosperous times. In 1874, the New Zealand Times reported a building frenzy. 'Cottages, cottages everywhere, and still the cry is "more".' The streets of Te Aro at one end of the town, and Tinakori Road at the other, resemble carpenters' workshops at some particular spots where building operations are thickest'.

While cottages similar to those of the early period continued to be built, the design of them became more varied, perhaps larger, and modest decoration of gables or verandahs became more common. More intensive use of valuable land meant that many were two storeys high. Some one room wide cottages were built up to one of the side boundaries with a path down the side of the building to the front door.

Pattern book designs made an appearance at this time. These were standard designs for cottages that could be economically built from drawings and schedules of materials, included in such books as 'Brett's



Colonist's Guide'. They were simple, logical designs, and fitted the local vernacular of the time.

The decade of the 1870s also saw the construction of some very substantial houses. These were the homes of wealthy merchants and businessmen, and they were generally designed by architects. Prior to 1870, there were few architects working in Wellington, and those that were, often designed just one or two special buildings. The exception was C J Toxward who was active from his arrival in 1866; Thomas Turnbull was in practice by 1872.

Premier House, Pendennis in Burnell Avenue and Thomas Turnbull's own house in Grant Road (now the Italian Embassy) are very good examples of the grand houses of the period. Formal Classical compositions and detailing is seen in these buildings - wide rusticated weatherboards for example, with 'quoins' at the corners, bracketed eaves, round columns supporting verandahs - indicative not just of the design input of an architect but of the wealth and status of the owner. The Italianate-style tower of Queen Margaret College, part of the house designed by Charles Tringham for T C Williams (1878) is perhaps the most sumptuous feature of any of these grand houses.

They were built on large sections (perhaps the whole of an original town acre) with large formal gardens and driveways; these have subsequently been subdivided. The only example of such a house in its original setting is Premier House, still sitting in a mature garden of three original town acres; (possibly the only un-subdivided town acres left in the city).



5.3 Built Form

5.3.1 Thorndon Architecture and Building Age

Turn of the Century 1880 - 1914

The 1880s was a time of economic depression, and there is no distinctive group of houses that are representative of the decade. During the 1890s, and through to the time of the First World War, Thorndon saw the construction of houses catering for all classes of society in a variety of styles.

Inner city working class housing from the turn of the century is well represented. Glenbervie Terrace is a very good example of a development of small-scale working class housing.

A collection of more substantial villas can be found on the north side of Aorangi Terrace; these are single-storey with bay windows, wide rusticated weatherboards and low-pitched roofs. While all were exactly matching in 1903, later modifications have seen some modest variation in form and detail in the row.

The most dramatic group (in a townscape sense) is that at 296 to 306 Tinakori Road - one-room wide houses, two or three storeys high, and one extending to five storeys following additions made early in its life. They too were built in response to the value of inner

city residential land, making intensive use of small sections. Such buildings are something of a Wellington vernacular, being rarely found elsewhere in the country.

This period saw the emergence of domestic styles of architecture that later became very popular, most particularly the Californian bungalow, which was the ubiquitous style of the new suburbs of the 1920s and 30s. By the time the style became popular a decade or more later, much of the residential land of Thorndon was built on, so typical bungalows are quite rare.

Although not to become widely popular, Arts and Crafts houses, designed by J W Chapman-Taylor, were built in Thorndon. These reflected his commitment to 'unassuming good taste, honesty of purpose' in careful hand working of natural materials, including hand-adzing of timber beams, natural and unadorned finishes, small-scale and homely spaces. The style can be found, in part, in the finish and decoration of grander houses.

