

Centres Design Guide

Appendix 5 – Adelaide Road/Mt Cook

The Adelaide Road area is a long wide corridor, defined by a busy arterial street. It is bounded to the west by Massey University and the residential area of Mount Cook, with Government House and Wellington Hospital to the east, and three major secondary schools in close proximity. A consequence of the wide range of activities of various types and scale within the area is a diverse range of building types and sizes. Furthermore it is an identified ‘area of change’ where significant development is anticipated.

Defining Features

The Adelaide Road area’s character is based on the following:

Diversity

Historically a mixed use area, this diversity continues into the present day, with continuation of a wide range of building ages, types, and radically diverse building sizes and frontage setbacks. While diversity is a defining characteristic, and attributes such as mixed building type and use contribute positively to character, other aspects such as a diversity of frontage setbacks and street edge treatments establish precedents which should not be followed.

Opportunity for change

The relatively low development on most sites relative to that permitted, and the openness of many sites fronting Adelaide Road offers significant development potential and opportunity for change. Well serviced and accessible, this area has been identified as suitable for change, and is planned to accommodate significant intensification.

Utilitarian building stock and streetscapes

The area also has a relatively undeveloped streetscape, and many utilitarian buildings with poor edges to the street. Streets are heavily vehicle dominated or service-oriented and lack public landscaping. The spaces between buildings are typically service oriented. With the exception of some spatial definition, the area has few of the qualities associated with high quality urban design. Characteristics include variable uncoordinated frontage setbacks, expanses of asphalt and on-site parking at the street edge, large monolithic walls. Large scale landscaping is notably absent. However, the diversity of urban form and activity, and the commercial and ‘gritty’ nature of Adelaide Road suggests vitality and contributes to a distinctive sense of place. When developing a new character, aspects of this vitality might be maintained in parallel with significant amenity enhancements.

Proximity to Government House

This area provides the setting for Government House: its main entry is from Dufferin/Rugby Streets, and the ceremonial drive extends along the eastern boundary of the area.



Characteristic diversity and opportunity for change along Adelaide Road

Government House and its grounds have a high public significance. They include heritage elements and features of local and national significance, and also contribute a park-like environment to the broader urban landscape. The significance of Government House, its adjacent grounds and driveway are such that special care is required with:

- The quality, articulation, composition and coherence of the tops and rear of buildings that are in view from Government House, from its grounds adjacent to the zone boundary, and frontages to Rugby Street adjacent to the main entrance.
- Avoiding visual dominance, compromising privacy and causing excessive shading at the main entrance space accessed from Dufferin/Rugby Streets, to the nearby Coronation Grove and the ceremonial drive that links these spaces.
- The visual quality of any structure or development adjacent to the main entrance to Government House.

Boundary to an old inner residential area

Along much of its eastern boundary this area adjoins concentrations of the older inner city housing of Mount Cook. This has a fine-grained domestic scale, interspersed with some large scale institutional buildings such as Massey University. Scale relationship adjacent to this area will be important.

Few and widely dispersed heritage buildings

There are several identifiable heritage buildings in the area, and these are widely dispersed. The most prominent is the hotel that occupies the south-west corner of Drummond Street and Adelaide Road. In only one instance, at the east side of Adelaide Road close to the John Street intersection is there a concentration of character buildings. This concentration of narrow-fronted retail buildings close to John Street extends the shops in adjacent Riddiford Street, contributing to a streetscape with a distinctive, fine-grained quality.

Local difference

Reinforcing the general diversity of character, different parts of this large area have their own definable character. Residential is dispersed throughout, but is concentrated along the fringes in the south-west and north east of the area. Even here, a significant variety of building type, and size as well as a variety of uses is apparent. Vehicle-oriented retail is typically found fronting on to Adelaide Road, and the streets immediately off that, however this creates uncoordinated open spaces and conditions which are not welcoming to pedestrians. The group of character buildings on the eastern side of Adelaide Road opposite John Street is the only grouping that relates to traditional patterns of retail development.

Character Overview

Building type

The area contains a highly diverse mix of building types accommodating a range of activities. Institutional buildings, large floor-plate industrial and manufacturing buildings, vehicle oriented retail, trade yards, medium rise apartments and small scale residential all occupy this area. Plans for large supermarkets at the northern end, and just beyond the south have been developed. There are however no buildings that rise significantly above the norm with the exception of a few outside the area in the



Government House main entrance with related entrance space behind



Coronation Grove



The ceremonial drive is a private tree-lined avenue of approach to Government House

adjacent Wellington Hospital, Massey University and Wellington College grounds.

Building size

Buildings here are highly variable in size, both in the vertical and horizontal dimensions. Small single storey cottages and two storey villas are interspersed with buildings that have large floor plates and are much higher, often up to four or five storeys in height. The permitted and discretionary height levels reflect that even taller buildings are anticipated.

Landform and character

Located along a valley floor, this area is looked down on from both residential areas to the west and Government House to the east. This makes the roofscape, including quality of building backs and tops, visually significant.

Building relationship to the street

The entire area is characterised by variable spatial enclosure with building fronts right on the street edge in some parts, and a variety of vacant sites and sometimes arbitrary setbacks in other places. Verandas are discontinuous, appearing only on four old buildings close to John Street. The western side of Adelaide Road has several wide frontages built to the street edge, and a higher degree of spatial definition than the eastern side.

Frontages vary greatly in width along Adelaide Road, depending on their location and size of building. There are many relatively blank and inactive facades at or close to the street edge, particularly with commercial and industrial buildings.

Vehicle access and parking

Adelaide Road carries a heavy traffic load and provides street-side car parking. Many existing activities have extensive on-site parking at the frontage, or parking that is dominant in view from the street. While a defining characteristic, this detracts from the amenity of the area.

Building form and façade treatment

Buildings are typically simple rectilinear primary forms, and simple shapes, aligned parallel to the street edge. This reflects the utilitarian origins of many of the industrial and commercial buildings here.

Buildings close to John Street have a richness of facade detailing characteristic of the era in which they were constructed. This detailing includes double hung windows, wide window facings, brackets or cover boards at corners, although these frontages have been heavily modified. The base of any shopfront glazing is typically raised above pavement level. While not every building in this grouping has a veranda, where these occur, veranda posts are typical. Upper level windows are typically proportioned to give a vertical emphasis.

Materials

The wide variety of materials used on different buildings through this area reflects the general diversity of building type, size and age.

Street landscaping

Street landscaping is limited and uncoordinated, with most frontages where buildings are not built to the street edge accommodating car parking, sometimes with associated planting.



Fine-grained neighbouring development on Douglas Street



One of the few dispersed heritage buildings, contributing positively to the streetscape



Mix of building types, viewed from King Street



Mix of building types and street edge along King Street

Existing patterns do not provide a precedent for future development.



Modest, narrow-fronted old buildings form a traditional streetscape close to John Street



Utilitarian buildings and typical street edge treatment along Adelaide Road