

# BUILT STRUCTURE

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Buildings are places of shelter and activity. Be it to sleep, work, or share a meal at a restaurant, buildings are core to the functioning of any city. They are also prominent features of the public realm. Their architectural qualities can dramatically add (or detract) from a place. Collectively, they create order in the city.

Wellington's central city residential population is likely to grow by several thousand people in coming decades. Though some of these people will find homes in inner suburbs, most will live in CBD apartments and townhouses. Residential amenity will need to improve, and developers will most likely have to cater for a wider range of residents, from individuals looking for 'crash pads' to families choosing an inner-city lifestyle. The city centre will need to provide services and recreation opportunities for children and the elderly.

There is sufficient capacity under the existing planning controls to accommodate growth. The key issues facing the city is ensuring quality and efficiency (that is, the right building on the right site).

The city's building stock is varied in terms of age, type and performance (eg energy efficiency). As buildings become renewed and sites developed there are opportunities to improve the quality and contribution that they can make to the city.

By developing in a way that takes into account the environment, surroundings, and the changing expectations and needs of businesses and residents, the city's building stock should be resilient into the future.

## **THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS AIM TO:**

- **Create a prosperous central city**
- **Accommodate growth and change**
- **Build the city in response to the local setting**
- **Create an eco inner-city**
- **Create inner-city neighbourhoods**
- **Tell our stories**
- **Strengthen character and coherence**

## PROJECTIONS FOR 2040

**20+** thousand estimated new dwellings required to accommodate growth across the whole city

(Population growth divided by average dwelling size of 2.5 people)

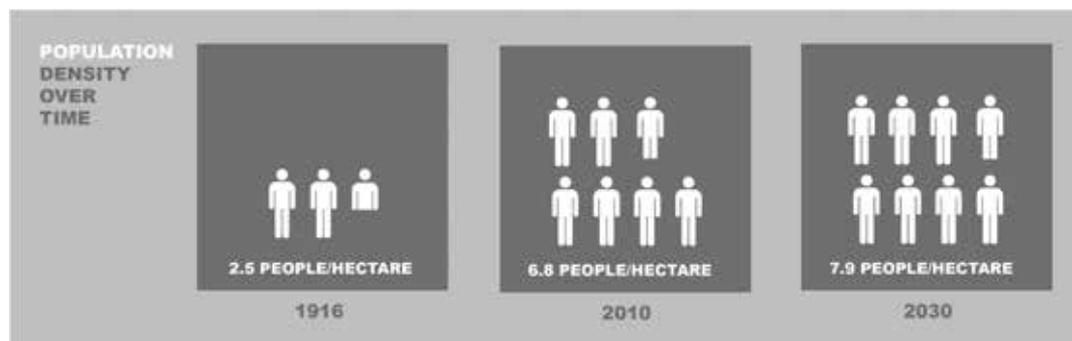


Figure 18. Innovative built structures that reflect the character and context of the area they are in help strengthen the coherence of the city.

# BUILDING QUALITY

Buildings should be designed with the landscape, streetscape, and neighbours in mind. Some buildings are well designed and have strong, clear links with the street and nearby open spaces. But in some parts of the city there are ad hoc relationships between buildings and street, with some buildings set back from the pavement while neighbouring buildings encroach. This gives a street an incoherent appearance, makes it harder to navigate, and harms character.

Likewise, some building developments are insensitive to the landscape or to neighbouring buildings. One example is building too close to the balconies or windows of neighbouring apartments.

Future planning regulations will enhance building quality, requiring sensitivity to streetscapes, landscapes and neighbouring buildings. The Council will also encourage buildings of distinction on key street corners and adjacent to public spaces and boulevards.

The Council will seek to ensure that the regulatory model is clear and managed in a way that provides certainty for developers, occupiers, neighbours and for future generations.

**Figure 19.**  
Buildings should be related to the surrounding area and add interest and rigour to the street.



Areas of opportunity	Potential actions
<p><b>Residential apartment design guide</b></p> <p>Create a comprehensive residential apartment design guide to increase private and public amenities, and encourage more efficient use of land and greener building standards. This will also take into account emergent technologies and the ability to more easily adapt buildings for different uses over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review existing design guides and planning controls related to built-form.</li> <li>– Review standards within Building Code and Act.</li> <li>– Create a comprehensive residential apartment design guide.</li> <li>– Use design guides to create assessment criteria within the District Plan.</li> <li>– Work with architects, developers, property owners, and other development professionals on education regarding apartment developments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Urban development panel</b></p> <p>An urban development panel could be established to assess large-scale or significant development proposals. The panel would include architects, landscape architects, technical consultants and property professionals. The overall objective would be to improve the quality of applications and make sure they comply with our standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review existing panel models within the New Zealand and international context.</li> <li>– Assess potential of having a regional panel.</li> <li>– Develop the model for Wellington, including member selection criteria.</li> <li>– Communicate to the development community the purpose and use of the panel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Integration of spatial tools into regulatory model</b></p> <p>The integration of precinct plans and other spatial tools that will be used to set new built-form controls into the existing regulatory model is an essential project. This will include work on the District Plan, policies and strategies. Within this project, a clear communication and education plan will be required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Examine legislative constraints and enablers for the use of spatial tools.</li> <li>– Determine possible options for spatial tools to be integrated and analyse the impact of these.</li> <li>– Investigate the use of different technology for delivery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ground floor frontage plan</b></p> <p>An overall plan defining uses and character of ground floor frontages, upgrades of frontages, alignments of facades as well as principles for zones on footpaths for commercial activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review existing design guides and planning controls.</li> <li>– Undertake comprehensive plan in relation to street role and function study.</li> <li>– Align advice with other proposed guidance documents.</li> <li>– Investigate best tools to implement.</li> <li>– Begin implementation process, with potential addition to existing design guides.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building resilience guide</b></p> <p>Create a comprehensive guide that promotes best practice responses on resilience for buildings. This will address both retrofits and new buildings with a particular focus on issues of flexibility, earthquakes and other environmental emergencies, and the risks associated with climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review existing codes and guidance.</li> <li>– Undertake research on international best practice and innovation.</li> <li>– Work with appropriate authorities on lessons learned on resilience.</li> <li>– Complete a comprehensive guide.</li> <li>– Investigate the best methods to implement.</li> </ul>

# BUILT HERITAGE

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Wellington's built heritage, as seen in places such as Cuba Street, is a key component of the city's character. Heritage must be protected and sustained.

This does not only mean protecting heritage buildings where that is safe and practicable. It also means learning lessons from the past about how the city's built character and streetscapes were created. As one example, in colonial times commercial buildings were typically built to the street, whereas in more recent developments the relationship between buildings and street has been less consistent. In turn, this inconsistency affects the character of a street or precinct.

A specific example is triangular sites on street corners. In colonial times, these important sites had high-quality buildings (such as

Lambton Quay's Old Bank Arcade) covering their entire footprint. More recently, however, these sites have sometimes been built with square or rectangular buildings that are cheaper to construct but don't have clear relationships with the street or its history.

This framework aims to make a feature of these triangular sites. These junctions where three streets come together are prominent. Improving the way their edges relate to their surrounds will be an important consideration. (Also see section *Open space*.)

Other interventions referred to elsewhere in this framework, such as 'stream streets' and initiatives to acknowledge Wellington's Māori settlements and land use, will also reveal the city's natural and cultural past.

**Figure 20.**  
 Stewart Dawson's  
 Corner and the  
 MLC building  
 show how clear  
 built relationships  
 to the street can  
 help people find  
 their way within  
 a city.





### Areas of opportunity

#### Heritage application

Wellington City didn't exist 200 years ago. Its history is remarkably compressed and it's a story of change. It's a history that is most clearly seen in the different ages and layers of buildings. But Wellington also has a much deeper and longer history than its buildings reveal. It has a geology, mythology, physical and cultural landscape and whakapapa that are unique.

The study, expression and sharing of these are as vital and prominent a part of the city as heritage architecture. While significant sites will continue to receive protection or acknowledgement in situ, stories and experiences will also need to be documented and shared. New and interactive ways of sharing these will be explored as will treatments such as 'stream streets' in the built environment.

#### Integration of heritage into the strategic design of public space

A stage of open space planning should be a consideration of context, including heritage. This encourages learning about the traditional uses for certain areas within the city and using these ideas to feed into the conceptual design of space. An example is how buildings were designed to emphasise parts of the street network.

#### Promote heritage debate

An area or building's heritage may relate to architectural style, events that happened there or other values. Promoting an understanding and debate about the merits of these would be an important test in guiding a review of current and future listings in the District Plan.

### Steps required

- Partner with mana whenua on revision of the Māori heritage listings in the District Plan.
- Explore the creation of heritage 'applications' for use in the city.

- Undertake case studies that demonstrate the primary lessons learnt from heritage within Wellington City.
- Apply case studies and principles to inform open space design.

- Assess the existing range of heritage listings in terms of the type of heritage they represent.
- Identify potential new listings that reflect 'gaps' in heritage.
- Assess the merits of introducing a 'scaled' heritage categorisation and associated levels of protection.
- Showcase examples of adaptive and economic reuse of heritage buildings.
- Identify levels of investment to ensure heritage stock is adequately maintained.

## **CASE STUDY SITES**

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Six sites have been identified as significant to the success of other projects in this framework. The sites were chosen and studied for the following reasons:

- the potential for development to contribute to key projects while still meeting developers' feasibility constraints
- the ability to test assumptions
- the site itself or existing built-form was problematic
- studies undertaken within the Spatial Structure Plan focused on mass, scale, alignment, building type and open space options.

They provide insight on the following issues:

- current regulations, likely bulk and mass
- public and private amenity issues
- streetscape and context/relationship to the area
- access to sunlight and cross ventilation
- private open space.

These studies are intended to be used to achieve better results with the specific property owners/developers of these sites.

It is also expected that they can be used as demonstrations to show how the approach could be applied to sites with similar conditions.

It is anticipated that further sites will be identified for specific study through the completion of precinct studies.

### 160 VICTORIA STREET

Within the context of the proposed Victoria Street realignment, 160 Victoria Street becomes an important built-form. The principles for this site are:

- relationship between massing and neighbouring sites
- relationship of form to the hierarchy of adjacent streets
- creating useful private open space
- creating useful communal open space
- improving the public domain quality of surrounding streets
- ensuring adequate natural light and ventilation to all units.



More detail can be found on each case study within the Spatial Structure Plan – page 76.

### 79 DIXON STREET

The site is important because of its prominent corner position, its location in relation to other projects and the constrained size. The principles for this site focus on:

- the reinforcement of the alignment of Victoria Street
- increased structure for the East-West link
- relationship of massing to neighbouring developments and potential amalgamation of sites
- creating useful private open space
- creating useful communal open space
- improving the public domain quality of surrounding streets
- ensuring adequate natural light and ventilation to all units.



More detail can be found on each case study within the Spatial Structure Plan – page 81.

**169 WAKEFIELD STREET**

This site has three street frontages and should form an edge to the important North-South spine of Taranaki Street. The relationship to Te Papa, Circa Theatre and the waterfront in general are also important factors. Principles articulated for this site are:

- use of internal courtyards to provide adequate light and ventilation
- use of podium structures to provide communal open space
- using appropriate building size and shape to define important corners and provide structure to wider space
- introducing cross-site walking links at ground level so pedestrians can take the shortest or most intuitive route.

More detail can be found on each case study within the Spatial Structure Plan – page 93.



**15 ABEL SMITH STREET**

The size, shape and general context of this site makes for an interesting study. The principles focused on are:

- mixed-use development
- introducing different typologies to deal with inherent site issues
- ensuring adequate natural light and ventilation to all units
- indicating entry to buildings through articulation of the building form
- increasing passive surveillance to the street
- creating useful private open space
- creating useful communal open space
- improving the public domain quality of surrounding streets.

More detail can be found on each case study within the Spatial Structure Plan – page 86.



#### 49 TORY STREET

This site has some large buildings that currently don't adequately address the primary frontage and it also has the potential to deliver greater connectivity through the large Te Aro blocks. The focus for this site is on:

- increasing the amount of external walls facing the street, this gives street addresses to more units
- using increased height to offset public uses through site
- increasing massing related to street hierarchy
- creating useful communal open space
- improving the public domain quality of surrounding streets
- ensuring adequate natural light and ventilation to all units.

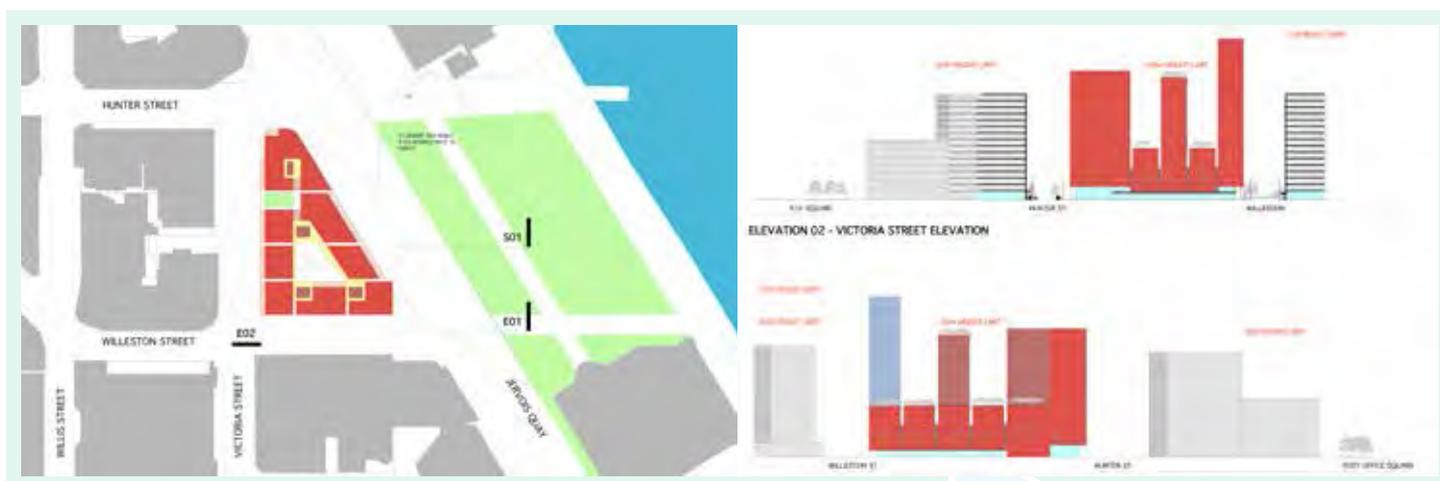


More detail can be found on each case study within the Spatial Structure Plan – page 89.

#### 11 VICTORIA STREET

This full block site is triangular in shape and forms part of one of the most important intersections in Wellington. Any proposal on this site will have significant impact on Frank Kitts Park, the waterfront, and the adjacent city blocks. The main considerations are:

- articulation of massing to reduce shadowing effects on park
- increasing access to sunlight
- using massing to emphasise significant intersection
- the provision of roof terraces to provide residential communal and private open space
- using balconies to increase passive surveillance and animate the building façade
- improving the public domain quality of surrounding streets
- ensuring adequate natural light and ventilation to all units.



More detail can be found on each case study within the Spatial Structure Plan – page 97.