

# Appendix 4: Southern Inner Residential Areas

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## 4.1 Significance of the Southern Inner Residential Areas to the City

Wellington’s Southern Inner Residential Areas cover three long established sub-areas/suburbs - Mt Cook, Newtown and Berhampore. Collectively, the three suburbs form a relatively large compact area with a distinctive character, strongly defined by the landform and the greenery of the Town Belt.

The collective character of the Southern Inner Residential Areas is of a considerable significance to the city as whole. The area is a highly intact remnant of inner city residential housing from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are dwellings dating back to the 1850’s and some housing clusters built prior to 1900. The predominant pattern, however, is of relatively high density detached housing from the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The area demonstrates consistency of building style and materials that is typical for Wellington’s inner suburbs.

While purpose-built multi-unit development has been relatively limited, the area as a whole, because of its proximity to the central city, is likely to be subject to on-going redevelopment.

The importance of the Southern Inner Residential Areas for the city is based on three valued features:

### Heritage Significance

The heritage significance of the area derives from the high concentration of early 20<sup>th</sup> century original dwellings (villas and cottages) in a consistent style, materials and scale. The majority of buildings are in a generally good condition and have remained largely unchanged.

While few individual buildings are of heritage significance in their own right, the Mt Cook/Newtown/Berhampore area as a whole displays a high degree of visual unity and substantially intact urban fabric of relatively low cost housing of the early 1900’s. The range of housing styles, however, indicates relative expressions of wealth associated with a diverse community.

The general intactness of the area’s urban fabric is largely due to the relatively limited number of new developments. New development occurs primarily in the form of multi-storey apartment blocks, typical around Riddiford Street, Adelaide



*The Area is a highly intact remnant of residential housing from the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*



*Consistency of character and a high degree of visual unity*

Road and Daniell Street, and townhouses with a more variable location.

### **Historical Continuity**

Development in Mt Cook, Newtown and Berhampore started in the nineteenth century. However, the most intense construction period was between 1900 and 1920 with the vast majority of buildings (approximately 80%) built between 1900 and 1909. Overall, changes made to the original housing stock over the decades have been relatively minor. This has resulted in a remarkable consistency of building age, type, form and style contributing to a strong sense of identity and historical continuity. The extent and intactness of this housing stock is significant as an important indicator of the early development of the city.

### **Distinctive Character**

The area as a whole has a strong sense of place. It is derived from its compact layout, relatively consistent form and defining topography, enhanced by the prominence of the Town Belt.

Several of the major streets running through the area are also important city routes with a distinguishable character and activity patterns. This gives the area a sense of structure and identity that is further emphasised by the presence of important public institutions and regional facilities, such as Massey University, Wellington Hospital, and Wakefield Hospital.

The area has a distinctive local character derived from the presence of identifiable large concentrations of buildings with consistent character. These are typically found in areas where the original housing stock has remained largely intact. The visual consistency within such areas, based on similarity in building age, type, form and scale, provides a strong sense of aesthetic coherence.

At the same time, the area exhibits a sense of visual diversity. This is derived from variations in roof form and building height, often accentuated by topographical variation and further enhanced by the presence of non-residential building types.



*Distinctive local character with a strong sense of place*



*Visual diversity derived from variations in roof form, building height and topography.*

## 4.2 Character Overview

Wellington's Southern Inner Residential Areas cover three distinctive and long established sub-areas - Mt Cook, Newtown and Berhampore. Collectively they contain approximately 5000 dwellings spread over 170 ha.

Most streets have an inner city urban character and with few exceptions are notable for a lack of street trees. Street edges are consistently defined by low fencing, street walls or raised terraces. There are a number of cul-de-sacs, typically characterised by consistency of character, mature vegetation and a strong sense of place.

The area as a whole has a degree of diversity with some local differences between the character of the sub-areas. Nevertheless, most of the buildings, constructed within the same time period, can be grouped into a small number of building types with a consistent form, scale and style.

The collective character of Wellington's Southern Inner Residential Areas is determined by the following common patterns:

### Building Type

*Limited range of building types* - the general pattern across the area is of detached dwellings on small, relatively narrow rectangular lots. These lots are generally laid out over the topography perpendicular to the street.

Villas and cottages are the predominant type. Bungalows also occur, but in much lesser numbers with more noticeable concentrations in Berhampore. The majority of houses are detached, but there are some clusters of semi-detached dwellings in each suburb.

The area contains a relatively small number of multi-storey apartment blocks and town house developments of variable scale and layout. Most of the multi-unit development is located along or close to major streets and/or on larger or former industrial sites.



*The undulating topography is a strong determinant of the area's overall character*



*Defined street edge with buildings typically aligned with the street grid*



*Limited range of building types*

## Building Size

### *Common building dimensions*

The area as a whole is characterised by small-scale detached dwellings of similar size and dimensions built on small narrow lots.

Building size is influenced by lot size and side yards, which vary across the area. However, the most common lot width is around 10m, while side yard dimensions are generally minimal and in many locations under 1.5m. Average building width is around 7-9m.

The greatest variability of building size, most often corresponding to variability of lot size, is found around the commercial and industrial areas along Adelaide Road, Riddiford Street and Wallace Street.

The area is a mixture of one and two storey dwellings and a limited number of buildings above two storeys. Records show that more than two-thirds of all buildings are single storey and the overwhelming majority (more than 95%) are under three storeys.

There are localities and significant groupings of buildings of similar height. Variation of height, with one and two storey dwellings next to each other, is also present, and variation of height, though generally not greater than one storey, is often accentuated by the topography.

### *Relatively consistent narrow frontage width*

There is a predominant pattern of small-scale dwellings with relatively narrow frontages in a consistent range of widths. Common building widths are in the 7-9m range.

The pattern of frontage width is clearly expressed through the separate roof forms of the individual dwellings, the existing side yard patterns and/or a variation of building height.

## Landform and character

### *Diverse landform associated with character variation*

The undulating topography is a strong determinant of the area's overall character. Variation of landform throughout the area accounts for variation in street edge definition, siting and size of dwellings. Typically the higher side of streets have stronger visual prominence with larger dwellings and deeper setbacks. In contrast, lower sides accommodate smaller dwellings and are less visually pronounced with their roofs being the main streetscape feature.

### *Building alignment and landform*

In almost all cases, and irrespective of the building type and site topography, the primary form of buildings is aligned to the lot boundary and the street grid.

## Intensity of development

### *Perception of density*

A combination of generally narrow lot frontages (average 10m width) and small separation distances (average 2m) creates a



*The area is a mixture of one and two storey dwellings*



*Common building dimensions*

sense of high density as seen from the street.

*Site coverage* - the area as a whole is characterised by relatively intensive development, based on a predominant site coverage in the range of 30-45%.

High intensity of development is typically compensated for by mid-block open space, created by the aggregation of rear yards, often with mature and visually prominent vegetation.



*High intensity development is typically compensated for by mid-block open space with mature vegetation*

### **Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street**

#### *Street edge definition/building alignment*

Buildings are consistently aligned with the street edge and display a strong street orientation with gables, large windows sometimes including bays and entries, often enhanced by verandahs and porches facing the street.

While there is some variation between the three sub-areas, in general setbacks are rarely minimal. Most buildings have a setback of 3m or more. Buildings closer than 2m from the street edge are rare. However, many street corners are defined by buildings built to the street boundary. This pattern is particularly evident in cases where the building is or has been a shop.

#### *Variation of setbacks linked to topography*

Variation of front yard dimensions usually relates to variation of topography. Dwellings on sites sloping steeply up from the street typically have deeper frontage setback than those on flat or downward sloping sites.



*Neighbouring buildings, aligned with each other give a strong street edge definition*

## Side and rear yards

Side yards are typically minimal. The exception to this pattern usually occurs in multi-unit developments or adjacent to ‘rights of way’. While side yard dimensions vary, the separation distance between most buildings is between 1.2 and 2.4m.

Houses are generally in alignment toward the front of the site, leaving a relatively large area of open space to the rear of the houses. Most sites have substantial rear yards with mature, visually prominent vegetation, and small well landscaped front gardens.

Throughout the area as a whole rear yard dimensions are highly variable. Common rear yard dimensions are in the 6-15m range. The vast majority of dwellings have a rear yard of 9m or more.

Mature, visually prominent vegetation is a characteristic feature for many rear and some front yards.

## Vehicle Access and Parking

*Limited on-site parking* - the general pattern of lots with narrow street frontage, small setbacks and/or steep topography in many cases precludes on site parking or garages at the street frontage. As a result, on-site parking is not common - carparking is typically on the street. Exceptions to this pattern relate primarily to wider lots with deeper frontage setbacks and some rear lots.

Most of the existing garages are found along the higher side of streets. Garages on steep frontages, typically built into the slope and located in front of and below the dwelling, have a lesser impact on the streetscape than free-standing garages.



*Carparking is typically on the street*

## Building form

### *Simple primary forms*

Buildings are characterised by simple rectangular primary forms.

### *Consistency of roof type and pitch*

The roofscape is based on a limited variety of roof types with characteristic combinations of type and pitch.

- Roofs are typically hipped or gabled, with the former most common. Centre gutter roofs are also present.
- Hipped roofs are typically low pitched.
- Gable roofs typically appear over secondary forms on buildings with a hipped roof (e.g. the bay of a bay villa)
- Steeply pitched gabled roofs are typical for cottages and dwellings with narrow footprints.
- Wide span gables are typically associated with 1920/30's bungalows.
- Verandahs at the front and lean-to roofs at the rear are common.



*Intricate roofscape demonstrating consistency of roof type and pitch*

- Flat roofs are uncommon.

### **Façade treatment**

#### *Clearly defined front elevations*

Front elevations are consistently oriented to the street and present a ‘public face’ with entrances, verandahs and bay windows facing the street. Only a limited number of dwellings have side entrances.

Some dwellings, typically on the low side of sloping streets, have a ‘main elevation’ facing out across the valley.

Characteristic of their era of construction, front elevations have well articulated surfaces with three-dimensional construction detail and a strong sense of façade relief. Decorative elements (e.g. moulded pediments, timber quoins, fretwork and wooden shingles) are typically used on villas and larger buildings. Verandahs, bay windows, and windows with vertical proportions are common design features.

#### *Informality at rear elevations*

Rear elevations were traditionally shaped by service requirements for the household, often with a poor relationship existing between the house and the garden. Opportunities have been taken to redevelop the rear elevations to open to the gardens, especially where there is a northerly aspect or view.

### **Materials**

#### *Limited palette of materials*

Painted weatherboards (plain or rusticated) and corrugated iron are typical for exterior walls and corrugated iron is the predominant roofing material. There are small clusters of old brick houses in each of the three sub-areas, built in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as part of the local brickworks.

Naturally weathered timber, brick and plaster finish walls, and tiled roofs are rare and most often relate to new development. However, brick also features in some old houses associated with the local brick industry.

Currently most building exteriors are light in colour. However, houses built during the 1890-1910 period were traditionally painted in deeper colours with strong contrasts used to enhance decorative detailing and roof forms.



*Entrances and main windows addressing the street*

### **Frontage Landscaping and Fencing**

Low fencing (typically a picket fence) or walls are the predominant features defining the street edges within flat areas or along the low side of streets with sloping topography.

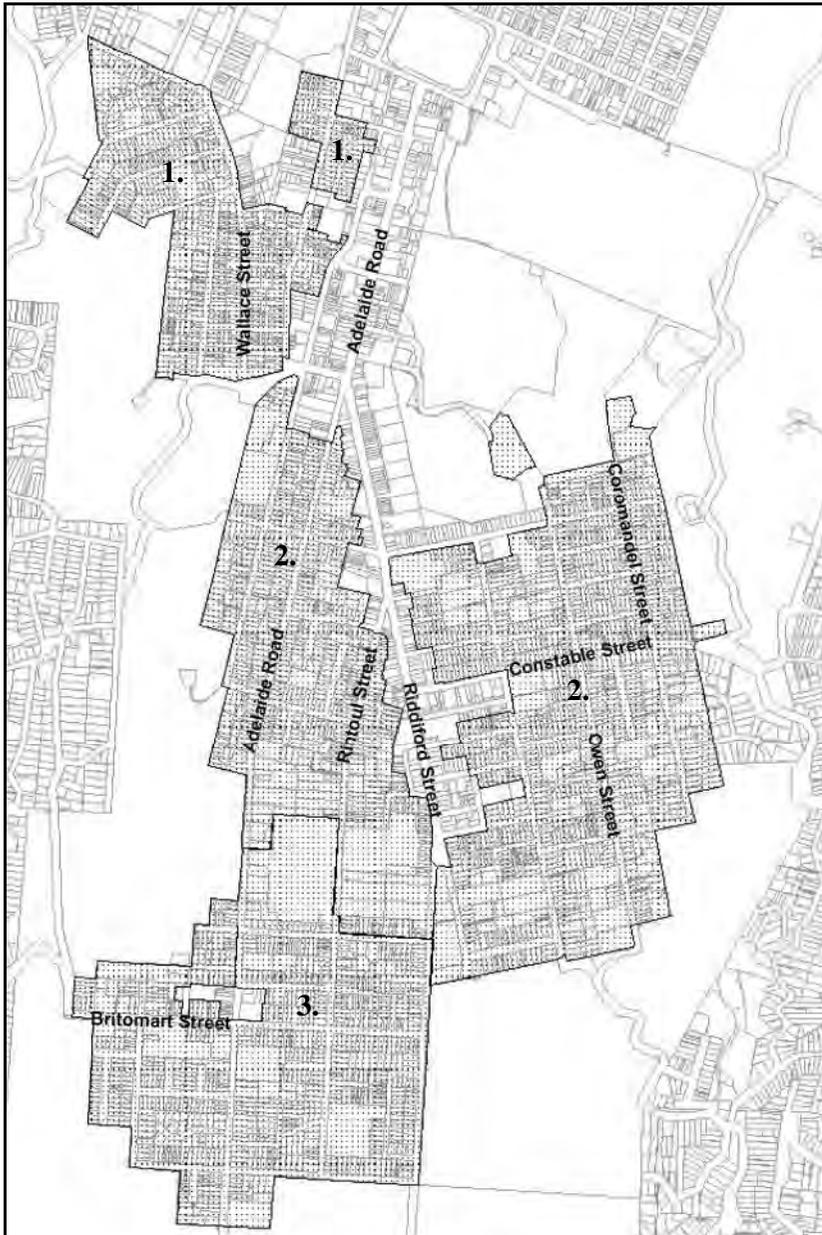
Street walls and raised terraces are typical for elevated sites along the higher side of sloping streets.

Small front gardens are important street frontage elements, present in most dwellings, enhancing their ‘public face’.

High, solid fences and walls are not common and where present are associated with out of character multi-unit development.

### 3.0 Sub-areas within the Southern Inner Residential Area

#### Sub-areas



- Boundaries of indicated sub-areas*
1. *Mt Cook*
  2. *Newtown*
  3. *Berhampore*