

Historic Heritage – Proposed District Plan

SUBMISSION TO WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL:

- PART 2 – HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL VALUES – HISTORIC HERITAGE
 - HH-P7 – *Additions, alterations and partial demolition of heritage buildings and structures*
 - *Design Guide Heritage*
- PART 4 – Heritage Buildings Schedule (SCHED1)

The wording proposed in section HH-P7, item c., pertaining to *Additions, alterations and partial demolition of heritage buildings and structures* is not appropriate. Amendments also need to be made to the *Design Guide Heritage* and the manner in which heritage buildings are included in the Heritage Buildings Schedule (SCHED1). Comments on all matters are set out below.

HH-P7, item c.

The proposed wording should be **deleted**.

~~*c. Retains the main determinants of the architectural style or design of the heritage building or heritage structure;*~~

A successful alteration or addition is not achieved by whether or not the main determinants of the architectural style have been maintained. This wording is very limiting and would have made the award winning projects, shown below, impossible.

Success can only be achieved through 'design excellence' – a measure that cannot be quantified or subjected to a "compare and contrast" test nor can it be described in a rule, set out in a district plan. Design excellence requires a collaborative effort of experienced architects, urban designers and planners. Working together to achieve the best outcome for the building and the city is critical to the success of any heritage project.

We need to be striving for design excellence to ensure that our heritage buildings are part of the future. Different projects require different approaches and there is no single solution that will fit all.

Design Guide Heritage

Several changes need to be made to the heritage design guide. The design guide should be exactly as the name suggest – a guide – not prescriptive.

G10. Delete:

~~also consideration can be given to the alignment of floor levels and window heads and sills~~

Sometimes the relationship between aligning key elements is important but this is not a measure of a good design, as the examples above show.

p.20 – Delete whole section.

These relationships are too prescriptive and will led to confusion – a single story could be 2.4m or for a luxury penthouse it could 5m. Different buildings and different contexts need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Good design and good contextual relationships need to be established.

G.16 Delete:

~~Restore or reconstruct shopfronts where there is evidence of original form, detailing and materials. Further non-statutory guidance is available in “Heritage shop fronts: A guide to maintaining and enhancing Wellington’s historic shops”.~~

Sometimes it is appropriate to restore and reconstruct shopfronts, particularly where heritage fabric remains, but this cannot be imposed on buildings where little, or no heritage fabric remains. There is often evidence of original form, detailing and materials in drawings and photographs, for instance, but where little or no fabric remains, it would rarely be appropriate to attempt to “turn back the clock” and reconstruct an entire shopfront. Shopfronts are subject to a high degree of change and upgrading, to align with current retailing demands, and often several iterations occur over the buildings lifetime.

G.16 conflicts with the objectives outlined in the Gehl Report.

G.15 is correct and supported.

G.40 Change wording to:

The installation of exoskeletons, external columns, and external bracing elements is discouraged, should only be considered where there is no viable, alternative engineering solution and consideration should be given to: particularly where these would:

Heritage Building Schedule (SHED1)

Consideration also needs to be given to the ranking of heritage items in SCHED1 – Heritage Buildings Schedule. Other authorities including Auckland Council and Heritage New Zealand, recognize that some buildings are more significant than others. The “blanket” approach taken by Wellington City Council makes it difficult to apply heritage in practice. A balanced approach is required, especially where seismic strengthening, thermal performance, and urban design considerations apply. The current blanket approach prevents balance being achieved.

It is the suggestion that item c. will be deleted in its entirety and the changes to the *Design Guide* and the scheduling will be applied.