
REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

**PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN CHANGE 39
RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER - CONTROL OF NEW RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN NEWTOWN, BERHAMPORE AND MT COOK;
AND AMENDMENTS TO NEWTOWN SUBURBAN CENTRE
CHARACTER AREA**

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval from the Committee to notify Proposed District Plan Change 39. Proposed District Plan Change 39 has two parts.

Part One proposes to introduce a revised planning regime for new residential developments in the Inner Residential Areas of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook to help ensure that these developments maintain and enhance the residential character of these suburbs.

Part Two proposes to make revisions to the Newtown Suburban Centre and Newtown Character Area, including amendments to the content of the design guide that applies to new building developments in this area.

2. Executive Summary

Residential Character

Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook have been identified as having a unique and special residential character. Consultation undertaken by the Council indicates that there is strong support amongst residents for increased protection of residential character in each of the three suburbs. District Plan Change 39 is proposed as a means of recognising and protecting this special residential character.

From a district plan perspective there are two aspects to providing character protection:

1. Protecting those buildings, spaces and other features that contribute to the existing character in each street and neighbourhood; and
2. Ensuring that new buildings and developments recognise and enhance the character of the street and neighbourhood.

Proposed District Plan Change 39 focuses on the second issue of ensuring that new buildings and developments in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook recognise and enhance the existing character of these suburbs. The plan change has three main parts:

1. Revision of the bulk and location standards in the District Plan to bring them into line with the physical characteristics of the area.
2. Preparation of a design guide to ensure that new multi-unit developments acknowledge and respond to the key characteristics of the area.
3. Revision of the policy and the discretionary matters relating to multi-unit developments.

Providing additional protection for existing streetscape and neighbourhood character buildings, is covered in part by ongoing investigations regarding possible listing of 'heritage areas' within the suburbs of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. The maintenance of streetscape character was also addressed by District Plan Change 38 which proposes to make the demolition of pre-1930's houses a Discretionary Activity, requiring resource consent from Council.

Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area

Council officers have undertaken a review of recent developments within the Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area. The review indicates that there is scope for improvement in the content of the design guide that covers the character area and suggests a number of potential amendments to the extent of the character area. As a result of the review, Proposed District Plan Change 39 changes the provisions that cover the Newtown Suburban Centre as follows:

- Amendments to the content of the existing Newtown Suburban Centre Design Guide.
- Renaming the design guide to remove current inconsistencies.
- Alterations to the extent of the Character Area.
 - Expansion of the character area to include the properties on the key intersection of John Street and Riddiford Street. These properties are included because of their size, high visibility, and location in relation to the northern entrance of the character area.
 - Expansion of the character area to include the New World site in Newtown. This site is suggested for inclusion because of its size, scope for significant redevelopment, and location at the edge of the existing character area.
 - Removal of a number of residentially zoned properties at the southern end of the character area on the grounds that they are zoned for residential purposes and are likely to be developed for residential purposes in the medium term.
- Alterations to the frontages where verandahs and display windows are required.

In summary, Proposed District Plan Change 39 represents an enhanced and appropriate planning regime that will better address the key planning issues facing the residential areas of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook, and the Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area.

The proposed plan change will support the direction of the draft Urban Development Strategy and the implementation of the growth spine concept. It acknowledges the need

to protect the City's unique character while providing for ongoing population growth. The plan change does not seek to prevent or unduly constrain residential and commercial development in these areas, but seeks to ensure that in carrying out new development, the key characteristics that make these suburbs special and contribute to the local sense of place are not lost.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agrees to notify Proposed Plan Change 39 (attached as Appendix One of this report) in accordance with the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991.*
3. *Agrees to adopt the Section 32 Reports for Proposed Plan Change 39 (attached as Appendix Two of this report).*
4. *Delegates to the Portfolio Leader for Urban Development the authority to approve minor editorial changes to the proposed Plan Change, and the authority to sign off on the final plan change documentation prior to notification.*

4. Background

4.1 Legislative Requirements

The purpose of the Resource Management Act, 1991 (RMA) is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. In relation to the maintenance of the residential character of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook, and the management of the Newtown Suburban Centre and Newtown Character Area, section 7 of the Act requires that the Council, in achieving the purposes of the RMA, has particular regard to:

- (b) the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources:*
- (c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values:*
- (f) the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment:*

Section 32 of the RMA requires that the Council considers alternatives, and assesses benefits and costs, before adopting any new District Plan provision. The Council must be satisfied that any proposed provision is necessary in achieving the purpose of the Act, and is the most appropriate means of achieving sustainable development.

PART ONE – RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

4.2 Character of Wellington's Inner City Suburbs

Wellington City's original inner city suburbs, wedged between the CBD and the Town Belt, are increasingly recognised as an important resource. Their high visibility and

original building stock make a significant contribution to Wellington City's unique character and are important in helping to define Wellington's sense of place.

Of the inner city suburbs, Thorndon, Kelburn, Aro Valley and Mt Victoria are all subject to District Plan controls relating to maintenance and enhancement of character and streetscape values. In the late 1990's the Council commissioned a series of reports which evaluated the residential character of these inner city residential areas. Following these reports, and in consultation with local residents groups, the Council put in place special controls for Mt Victoria and Thorndon by way of Variation 14 to the Proposed District Plan. This was followed by Plan Change 7 which addressed residential character issues in Aro Valley.

Attention has now turned to Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook, the only remaining inner city suburbs with no specific District Plan controls relating to residential character (see note on Proposed District Plan Change 38 in section 4.4 below).

In developing this plan change, consideration was given to the location of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook on the edge of the central city and in close proximity to key public transport links. In particular the plan change acknowledge the location of the suburbs along the urban 'growth spine' identified in the Council's draft Urban Development Strategy.

4.3 Research and Consultation

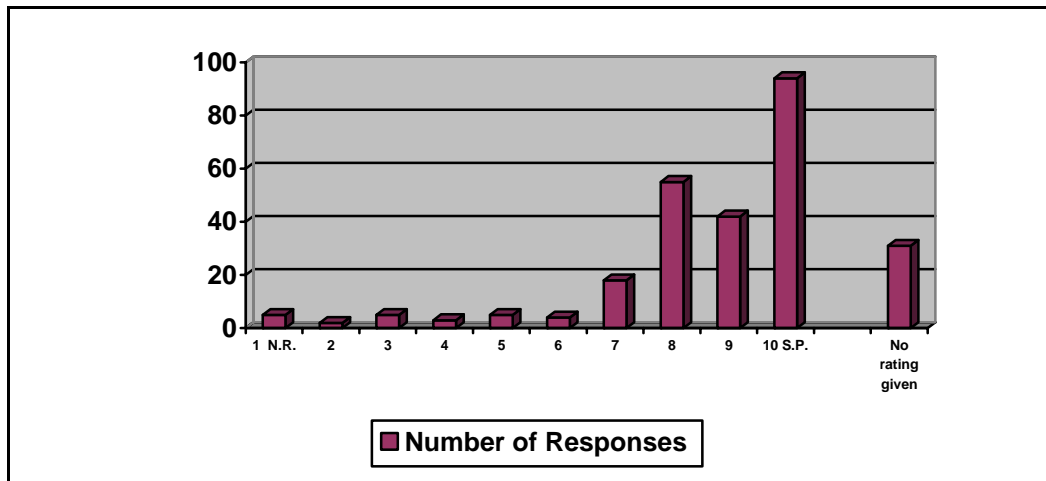
In 1999 the Council commissioned an evaluation of the residential character of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook (referred to as 'the study area'). The report, prepared by Deyana Popova and Graeme McIndoe, concluded that:

"The study area as a whole has a distinctive local character that is identifiably part of the inner city. The entire study area is of considerable significance to the city as a whole. It remains as a highly intact remnant of inner city residential housing from the first decade of the 20th century. It demonstrates historical patterns of relatively high density detached housing and expression of style and materials from a past era that are typical of Wellington inner suburbs. The significance of the area's local character deserves recognition and suggests that new development should respect its fundamental qualities."

(McIndoe & Popova, March 1999. Wellington Inner City Urban Design Evaluation, Mt Cook, Newtown, Berhampore, page 2)

The report noted that these suburbs have a distinctive local character derived from the retention of a high proportion of inner city residential housing dating from the first decade of the 20th century. The age profiles of these areas have strong similarities with Thorndon and Mt Victoria in that the majority of buildings were erected prior to 1920. The character and type of residential buildings in the southern inner residential area is not particularly rare, but what remains is irreplaceable and important in defining the character of Wellington City as a whole.

In September 2004, the Council undertook a pamphlet survey of all ratepayers in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook to gauge the level of support for additional controls to retain and protect streetscape and residential character values. The pamphlet drew over 260 responses spread across all three suburbs. It asked respondents to rate the appropriate level of residential character protection on a scale of 1-10. The graph below plots the response with 1 being no additional rules or protection, and 10 being strong protection.



The majority of respondents supported increased protection for the residential character of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. Many respondents supported the retention of existing character dwellings, and greater control of infill and multi-unit developments. There was significant concern expressed that high density infill housing was adversely affecting existing character through loss of green space and vegetation, increased traffic volumes, lack of adequate on-site parking, and reduced sunlight and privacy for adjoining properties. There was strong support for some degree of design control for new developments to ensure that new buildings are in sympathy with the colonial/turn of the century character of the suburbs.

The survey was followed by a series of three workshops to discuss issues and options for providing additional protection of residential character in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. The outcomes of the survey and workshops are outlined in the following section, and in the Section 32 report attached to this report.

In summary, there was strong support amongst both the pamphlet survey respondents and workshop attendees for additional protection of existing residential character in each of the three suburbs.

In September 2005 an update on the residential character work was sent to all of the pamphlet respondents, all workshop attendees, and all submitters on proposed District Plan Change 38. The update included a summary of proposed changes to the residential and multi-unit provisions that apply in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. Four responses were received, three generally in support of the proposed direction, and one in opposition on the grounds that the current provisions are working well and do not need modification.

A public meeting was held on 10th October 2005 to discuss the proposed changes to the residential and multi-unit provisions applying in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. The meeting had an attendance of 18 including two Councillors, and representatives of Newtown Residents Association, Historic Places Trust, and the residents of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook.

4.4 Proposed District Plan Change 38

Proposed District Plan Change 38 was publicly notified in July 2005. The plan change was notified in response to the potential demolition of a number of significant character dwellings in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. The plan change requires resource consent for the demolition of residential buildings constructed prior to 1930 in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. The plan change seeks to maintain the residential character of these suburbs by ensuring that existing character dwellings are not demolished unless:

- It can be demonstrated that their contribution to streetscape character is minor; or
- The contribution made by the proposed replacement building(s) will be as good if not better than the existing dwelling.

Thirty eight submissions were received on Plan Change 38, with approximately one third opposed and two thirds in support of the plan change (either in total or in part). A summary of the submissions has been prepared and was publicly notified on Thursday 6th October 2005.

PART TWO – NEWTOWN SUBURBAN CENTRE

4.5 Research and Consultation

Following enquiries from the Newtown Residents Association, officers have undertaken a monitoring review of recent developments within the Newtown Character Area, as well as a review of the contents of the Newtown Suburban Centre Design Guide. The review has identified scope for improvement in the content of the design guide and a need to extend the character area. The changes arising from the review cover four main areas:

- Amendments to the existing Newtown Suburban Centre Design Guide.
- Renaming the design guide to remove current inconsistencies.
- Alterations to the extent of the Character Area.
- Alterations to the frontages where verandahs and display windows are required.

Consultation with landowners within the Newtown Suburban Centre was undertaken in October 2005, in the form of a mail out. As a result of the mail out the Council received a number of phone calls to clarify the implications of the proposed verandah requirements, plus one request not to install the verandah requirement to 236-240 Riddiford Street on the grounds that it is zoned Inner Residential and will be re-developed for residential purposes in the short to medium term.

The Newtown Residents Association provided comprehensive feedback on the proposed changes. Representatives of the Association suggested a range of additional amendments, alterations and re-zonings that they considered would assist in the

management of the character of the Newtown Suburban Centre. Where appropriate these suggestions have been incorporated into proposed Plan Change 39. The remainder have been set aside to be considered as part of other projects on the District Plan Team's work programme, including the Central Area review, implementation of the Urban Development Strategy and the review of the heritage listings in the District Plan.

5. Discussion

PART ONE – RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

The purpose of this plan change is to put in place a set of District Plan provisions that will ensure that new residential developments in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook maintain and enhance the existing residential character of the suburbs.

5.1 *Comprehensive approach to residential character*

From a District Plan perspective there are two aspects to providing character protection:




1. Protecting those buildings, spaces and other features that contribute to the existing character in each street and neighbourhood; and
2. Ensuring that new buildings and developments recognise and enhance the character of the street and neighbourhood.

The first of these issues, regarding additional protection for existing streetscape and neighbourhood character buildings is covered by ongoing work to identify if there are any groups of buildings in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook that are of such heritage significance as to warrant listing in the District Plan as Heritage Areas. It is anticipated that this work will be reported to Committee in 2006 as part of the review of the heritage listings in the District Plan.

The maintenance of streetscape character was also addressed by District Plan Change 38 which proposes to make the demolition of pre-1930's houses a Discretionary Activity, requiring resource consent from Council.

5.2 *Proposed Plan Change - Residential Character*

The table below identifies the key factors that can cause new residential developments to jar with the character of the surrounding area. It also identifies the changes proposed by District Plan Change 39 to help manage these factors.

Issue	Proposed Response	Example of the issue
<p>The bulk of the new building(s) is out of scale with surrounding properties.</p> <p>The location of new buildings on site does not reflect existing patterns of development.</p>	<p>Revise bulk and location rules to better reflect the existing character of the area.</p> <p>Provide more specific design guidance for new developments.</p> <p>Introduce new discretionary elements to rule 5.3.10 to cover building bulk.</p> <p>Add text to policy 4.2.3.3 to clarify the application of permitted baseline to multi-unit developments.</p>	 <p>Daniell Street, Newtown</p>
<p>Lack of open space and green space on site</p>	<p>Increase front yard requirement to 3 metres.</p> <p>Decrease maximum site coverage to 45%.</p> <p>Install a requirement to provide ground level open space on site, either per unit or as shared open space.</p>	 <p>Finlay Terrace, Mt Cook</p>
<p>Poor quality design and materials, and a lack of façade relief</p>	<p>Implement an area specific design guide for multi-unit developments.</p> <p>Apply the design guide to any development that will result in two or more units per site.</p> <p>Require applicants to submit a cross section of the façade showing depth and relief.</p>	 <p>Stoke Street, Newtown</p>

The draft proposed district plan change has three main components. These are:

1. Bringing the bulk and location standards in the District Plan into line with the physical characteristics of the area.
2. Introducing of a design guide for new multi-unit developments in the area.
3. Revising of the policy and discretionary criteria relating to multi-unit developments.

Each of these is discussed below.

Bulk and Location Standards

The table below summarises the proposed revisions to the bulk and location standards applying to Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook.

Standard	Existing	Proposed	Anticipated effect of change
Building height	10 metres above ground level	9 metres above ground level	Proposed standard more accurately reflects the existing building height across the three suburbs. The 9 metre height strikes an appropriate balance between permitted building height and maintaining a standard that is flexible enough to cope with the varied terrain found in the area.
Site coverage	50 percent	45 percent	The existing provision provides for a higher level of site coverage than is characteristic of the area. As a result on many new multi-unit developments buildings and hard sealed vehicle manoeuvring areas dominate the site, often at the expense of green space. The revision of site coverage to 45 percent will reduce the maximum density of new developments and better enable them to provide for on-site ground level open space.
Front yard	1 metre	3 metres (subject to ability to build closer to match the existing location of adjoining buildings).	The proposed front yard provision will ensure that new buildings respond to one of the basic built characteristics of the suburbs, which is a reasonable set back of buildings from the

Standard	Existing	Proposed	Anticipated effect of change
			street frontage. Provision of a 3 metre front yard will also provide sufficient space to incorporate planting into the design of new developments. In areas where the existing pattern is smaller or no front yards, new buildings may build closer to the street to match neighbouring buildings.
Ground level open space	35 square metres per unit (minimum dimension of 3 metres), or a deck of 10 square metres. This provision is administered via the multi-unit design guide.	A rule requiring 35 square metres of private open space per unit (minimum dimension of 3 metres), or a deck of 10 square metres. If the private open space is provided as a deck, then an area (or areas) of shared open space must be provided on site equivalent to 35 square metres for each unit.	At present the requirement to provide ground floor open space is contained in the multi-unit design guide and not as a rule. As a result the ground level open space is often substituted by an elevated deck to make room for buildings and vehicle manoeuvring space. The result is a lack of open, green space on many sites. The intention of the new rule is to require a significant amount of open space (either shared or private) to be provided on site. The provision of ground level open space will be assisted by the proposed reduction in site coverage to 45 percent.

It is noted that some of these issues (particularly site coverage and the provision of open space) are not restricted solely to Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook and would apply to other suburbs throughout the city. While the extent of this plan change is limited to these three suburbs, the issues and responses identified will feed into Council's on-going work regarding the management of the effects of infill development.

Design Guide for Multi-Unit Development

A design guide has been prepared that identifies the key characteristics of the three suburbs, and addresses the issues raised by new multi-unit developments locating in the area. The design guide describes the existing character of each of the three suburbs, and identifies the defining features of the existing building stock. The design guide contains guidance on:

- Building height
- Building dimensions and frontage width
- Spacing between buildings (side yards)

- Setbacks from street boundaries (front yards)
- Private open space and rear yards
- Vehicle access and parking
- Building and frontage orientation
- Roof type
- Articulation of building form
- Materials
- Frontage landscaping and fencing

Earlier consultation revealed a frustration that the principles of the current multi-unit design guide are not being used to mitigate the scale and bulk of new multi-unit development. In particular it was anticipated that the design guides would carry more weight and could be used to lower heights below the maximum of 10 metres in situations where the existing character was 1-2 storeys. In reality the way in which case law on 'permitted baseline' has evolved since the District Plan was adopted has meant that the permitted activity standards regarding height, site coverage and parking have dominated issues of context and design. To redress this balance the following changes are proposed to the provisions of the District Plan.

- Include a reference in the District Plan to remove the ability to apply permitted baseline assessments to multi-unit developments.
- Provide additional discretionary items to the rule 5.3.4 to widen the scope of issues that the Council may consider and control through conditions.
- Provide additional assessment criteria to rules 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 to provide additional guidance as to the type and scale of development that is suitable in these three suburbs.

While technical in their nature it is anticipated that these amendments will allow greater weight to be attached to the provisions of the design guide to ensure that new multi-unit developments respect the character of the surrounding neighbourhood.

The design guide identifies that well articulated front elevations are a key feature of the area. A lack of depth and articulation on the front elevation is a contributing factor in preventing some new developments from complementing surrounding properties. To help rectify this it is proposed to introduce a requirement in the District Plan that applications for resource consent for multi-unit developments contain a vertical cross section of the front façade, which shows the depth and relief of elements contained within the facade.

5.3 District Plan Objectives and Policies

With regards the issue of the management of new residential dwellings and multi-unit developments in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook the following existing Objectives and Policies are particularly relevant:

Objective 4.2.1 *To promote the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources in Residential Areas*

Policy 4.2.1.1 Encourage new urban development to locate within the established urban area.

Objective 4.2.2 *To maintain and enhance the amenity values of Residential Areas.*

Policy 4.2.2.1 Control the potential adverse effects of residential activities.

Objective 4.2.3 *To maintain and enhance the physical character of Residential Areas and identified areas of special streetscape or townscape character.*

Policy 4.2.3.1 Control the siting, scale and intensity of new residential buildings to reflect the differences between older and more recent suburban Residential Areas.

Policy 4.2.3.2 Maintain the special character of identified residential character areas.

Policy 4.2.3.3 Control the potential adverse effects of multi-unit residential development.

Objective 4.2.4 *To ensure that the adverse effects of new subdivisions are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*

Policy 4.2.4.2 Allow infill subdivision within suburban areas subject to conditions or criteria which ensure adverse effects, including cumulative effects, are avoided, remedied, or mitigated and that sites are suitable for intended uses.

The District Plan policies require that a balance be struck between the promotion of residential intensification and the maintenance of the existing character and amenity of the city's residential areas. Multi-unit developments are specifically identified as an activity to be provided for subject to special consideration of the potential adverse effects. At present in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook the District Plan rules could be considered to be weighted towards the promotion of residential intensification over retention of character, with a number of the key bulk and location rules being set at levels that are significantly more intensive than the existing built patterns in the area.

In recent years there has been growing recognition that Wellington's inner city suburbs and their character houses are a valuable resource. This is acknowledged in both the Built Heritage Policy (2005), the Sense of Place Strategy, and the draft Urban Development Strategy recently prepared by the Council.

While a number of key bulk and location standards have been amended as part of Proposed District Plan Change 39, a key to ensuring that high quality multi-unit

development is achieved is the provisions of clear policy guidance to assist in the assessment of resource consent applications. For this reason it is proposed to add two new policies to explain the Council's desired outcomes in relation to open space and hard surfacing. These are:

4.2.3.3.A Require open space (either private and/or shared) to be provided as part of new multi-unit developments in Mt Cook, Newtown and Berhampore (as shown in Appendix 9). Ensuring that new multi-unit developments provide a reasonable degree of on-site green open space will help to mitigate potential adverse impacts by:

- **Enhancing the on-site amenity of the development**
- **Providing a setting for the new buildings and structures on site**
- **Assisting to integrate the new development into the character of the surrounding area.**
- **Softening the visual impact of new buildings and structures from surrounding public spaces.**
- **Providing green open space allowing for substantial trees and vegetation on site**

METHODS

- Rules
- Advocacy
- Design Guide (Multi-Unit Housing)

The traditional development pattern in Mt Cook, Newtown and Berhampore is a single household unit per site. As a result most properties retained a reasonable area of open space on site. Rear yards with mature visually prominent vegetation and well landscaped front gardens are typical features of the character and amenity the suburbs. The building bulk of new multi-unit development, together with the hard surface areas required for vehicle manoeuvring can alter the valued character and amenity by reducing the sense of greenness and open space.

4.2.3.3.B Minimise hard surfaced areas associated with new multi-unit residential developments in Mt Cook, Newtown and Berhampore (as shown in Appendix 9) and increase opportunities for green open space and planting to enhance visual amenity and to help integrate the new developments into the character of the surrounding area.

METHODS

- Advocacy
- Design Guide (Multi-Unit Housing)

The suburbs of Mt Cook, Newtown and Berhampore are characterised by a sense of openness, greenery and the presence of mature vegetation. Multi-unit developments can compromise this characteristic feature due to the percentage of the site taken up with building footprint, and vehicle parking and manoeuvring space. For this reason Council will seek to ensure that the hard surfacing associated with new multi-unit developments is kept to a minimum.

Proposed District Plan Change 39 strikes an appropriate balance between enabling development, and protecting residential character and the values that contribute to Wellington's sense of place. It does not seek to prevent residential intensification in

Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook, but seeks to ensure that in achieving intensification the key characteristics that make these suburbs special are not lost.

PART TWO – NEWTOWN SUBURBAN CENTRE

5.4 Proposed Plan Change – Newtown Suburban Centre

Under the District Plan, the commercial centre in Newtown is zoned Suburban Centre. This zone provides for a wide range of uses including retail, service, industrial and residential activities. The main shopping area in Newtown (which is focused on Riddiford Street) has been identified as having a distinctive nineteenth-century character that has been lost from most other suburban centres and which is important to the city’s overall identity. To date the Council has sought to preserve this character by means of a design guide covering new buildings, and additions and alterations to existing buildings. While the guide does not require new developments to copy nineteenth century buildings, they must support the character of the area through the incorporation of certain design elements found in traditional commercial developments in the areas.

The purpose of this plan change is to update the content of the Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area Design Guide, revise the extent of the character area, and amend the areas of Newtown that are subject to the verandah and display window requirements in the District Plan.

5.5 Amendments to the Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area Design Guide

Issue	Proposed amendments to Design Guide with comments
Bulk and scale	<p><i>Install an additional guideline in regard to ‘building scale’ to ensure a better scale transition in cases where height difference between adjacent buildings is greater than 1 storey.</i></p> <p>Overall, new development does not raise significant scale issues. The height and bulk of new development generally fits well into the diverse character of the area with buildings of variable height and bulk.</p>
Building corners and side elevations	<p><i>Install an additional guideline to ensure that all visible parts of a development, with a special reference to building corners and side elevations, are consistently treated and add to the collective character of the area.</i></p> <p>While most side elevations are not seen from the street, there are cases where large portions of, and even entire side elevations, are visually exposed. The detailed design of building tops and associated parapets, particularly along building corners and side elevations also raise issues that need to be addressed.</p>
Street edge definition and treatment	<p><i>Install an additional guideline to address street edge treatment.</i></p> <p>This issue relates to sites used for carparking and/or activities that require deep frontage setbacks (e.g. service stations, fast food outlets, commercial/service type premises). Continuity of shelter for pedestrians and street edge definition are the two key issues to be addressed.</p>
Additions and alterations to non-	<p><i>Install an additional guideline to ensure that changes made to non-character buildings respect the heritage character of neighbouring</i></p>

Issue	Proposed amendments to Design Guide with comments
character buildings	<p><i>buildings.</i></p> <p>Most of the additions/alterations to non-character buildings occur beside or amongst original/heritage buildings. In this respect, it is important to enhance existing heritage settings and ensure new buildings are compatible with the heritage items. The emphasis should be on building scale, façade modelling and quality design, rather than on stylistic detail. The objective is to encourage a sensitive and creative response to the characteristic building patterns, assisting the relationship between old and new, rather than reproducing what is there.</p>
Materials and design detail	<p><i>Install an additional guideline relating to design detail to be assessed as part of the resource consent application.</i></p> <p>Many new developments lack the visual richness, façade relief/detail and general architectural quality typical for the original buildings. Guidance on these matters is required focusing on detailed design quality.</p>
Verandahs	<p><i>Apply the verandah/shopfront requirement to all properties within the Character Area, except for those where providing a verandah or shopfront is impractical due to topography or building type.</i></p> <p>Currently the Design Guide requires that all new development within the ‘character area’ should provide verandahs. However, the frontages identified as requiring a verandah do not completely overlap with the outline of the area subject to Design Guide assessment.</p> <p>The three notable exceptions include sections of the area at the northern end/east side of Riddiford Street (a collection of original buildings with verandahs), the southern end/west side of the Riddiford Street (a listed heritage building without a verandah) and the area along Constable Street (that includes a variety of buildings without verandahs).</p>
Ground level activities	<p><i>Install a guideline relating to the provision of interactive, public uses at ground floor level</i></p> <p>Ground level activities and interaction between building interiors and the street is an important aspect of Newtown’s character. This should be acknowledged in the Design Guide to assist maintaining and reinforcing the importance of current activity patterns.</p>
Design Guide title	<p><i>Amend the title and make wording consistent throughout the design guide.</i></p> <p>The title of the Design Guide has not been consistently used or referred to in the various parts of the District Plan. For example, the front cover of the Design Guide is titled ‘Newtown Suburban Centre Design Guide’, while the header on the same page says ‘Newtown Suburban Centre Character Guide’. The District Plan refers to it as ‘Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area Design Guide’.</p> <p>The current name of the design guide makes reference to both the zoning (suburban centre) and its location in the wider Newtown area. The essential character of the area promoted by the Design Guide, however, is derived from buildings centred almost exclusively along Riddiford Street. To this end, it is more appropriate to call the document the ‘Riddiford Street Design Guide’. This will provide a more accurate reference to the area’s character and sense of place.</p>

5.6 Alterations to the extent of the Newtown Character Area

The Newtown Character Area is focussed on those properties that front Riddiford Street, from John Street in the north to Rhodes Street in the south. The southern edge of Constable Street is also included, while the Wellington Hospital site is excluded and subject to its own design provisions. The properties within the Newtown Character Area are subject to Rule 7.2.1 which requires resource consent for new buildings, and additions and alterations to existing buildings as a Controlled Activity. The consent process allows the Council to assess the '*design, external appearance, and siting*' of the new building works against the content of the Newtown Suburban Centre Design Guide.

It is proposed to make three alterations to the extent of the Newtown Character Area:

- Expansion of the character area to include the properties on western edge of the key intersection of John Street, Adelaide Road and Riddiford Street.
- Expansion of the character area to include the New World site in Newtown.
- Remove a number of residentially zoned properties at the south-western end of the character area on the south side of Gordon Place.

John Street/Adelaide Road/Riddiford Street Intersection

The intersection of John Street, Adelaide Road and Riddiford Street is a key intersection that serves as the northern gateway to the Newtown Character Area. It is proposed to extend the character area to cover properties on the northern and southern edges of the John Street/Adelaide Road intersection. While these sites do not currently share the core characteristics of the character area, their location in relation to Riddiford Street and their high visibility mean that any future redevelopment would have a significant impact on the character of the northern end of the Newtown Character Area.

New World Site between Newtown Avenue and Normanby Street

This is a large site that occupies the western third of the block between Newtown Avenue and Normanby Street. The Riddiford Street frontage of the site is already contained within the Newtown Character Area, but the remaining two thirds of the property is not included. Because of the large size of this site it has the potential to significantly affect the character of the Newtown commercial centre if it is redeveloped in the future. Of particular interest is the north facing frontage along Newtown Avenue, which is at present a blank concrete wall (with a verandah), but which could be developed as an extension of the existing retail/commercial frontage.

236-262 Riddiford Street

In 1996 the District Plan Hearings Committee expanded the Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area to cover those properties on the western edge of Riddiford Street from Gordon Street south to Russell Terrace (No's 236-262 Riddiford Street). At the time the Committee noted that the properties, despite being zoned Inner Residential, represented part of the commercial area of Newtown. However no rule was introduced into the Inner Residential provisions to implement the character area design guide. As a result the properties from 236-262 are included in the Newtown Character Area, but there is no means by which to apply the Newtown Design Guide if these sites are redeveloped.

Since the Committee decision was made the properties at 250-262 Riddiford Street have been renovated and are now used for residential purposes, while No's 236-248 Riddiford Street continue to be used for commercial purposes.

On this basis it is considered that the inclusion of the properties at 250-262 Riddiford Street into the character area is an anomaly. They are currently being used for residential purposes and are unlikely to return to commercial use given the current residential zoning. Each of these properties is a listed heritage item in the District Plan, and it is considered that the heritage provisions of the Plan provide the most suitable tool for managing future development of these sites.

The owner of 236 Riddiford Street (Union Hardware) has indicated that they intend to redevelop their site for residential purposes when the current lease on the hardware store expires. If this occurs then the site would be subject to the Southern Inner Residential Area appendix of the Multi-Unit Design Guide which is proposed as part of this plan change.

On this basis it is considered that the Newtown Character Area overlay should be removed from the residentially zoned properties at the southern end of the character area (236-262 Riddiford Street).

5.7 Alterations to the frontages where verandahs and display windows are required

The review of the Newtown Suburban Centre recommended that all properties within the Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area should be subject to the provisions of the Plan that require verandahs and display windows at the street edge. The provision of verandahs is identified as being a key characteristic of the Newtown Suburban Centre. At present these provisions only apply to properties that front Riddiford Street and the intersection of Riddiford Street and Constable Street. The purpose of the provisions is to promote a positive pedestrian environment and to ensure that shop fronts are retained on streets that are principally retail in character. A map is attached showing the areas where the rule already applies and the possible new frontages.

The verandah and display window provisions do not require property owners to install a verandah and shopfront 'retrospectively'. Rather the provisions are applied if a new building is built or if an existing building is subject to a significant addition or alteration.

5.8 District Plan Objectives and Policies

With regards the issue of the management of the Newtown Suburban Centre Design Guide the following existing Objectives and Policies are particularly relevant:

Objective 6.2.1 ***To promote the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources within Suburban Centre areas.***

Policy 6.2.1.1 ***Generally contain existing Suburban Centres within defined boundaries.***

Objective 6.2.2 ***To maintain and enhance the amenity values of Suburban Centres and any nearby Residential Areas.***

Policy 6.2.2.6 *Ensure that on streets or access routes where there are many pedestrians, verandahs are continuous.*

Objective 6.2.3 ***To maintain and enhance the physical character, townscape and streetscape of Suburban Centres.***

Policy 6.2.3.2 *Maintain the particular nineteenth-century character of the main commercial centres of Newtown and Tinakori Road in Thorndon by requiring that all new building work, alterations and additions to existing buildings are assessed against Design Guides.*

Policy 6.2.3.4 *Maintain identified retail frontages within existing Suburban Centres.*

The District Plan objectives and policies acknowledge the important role played by suburban commercial centres in maintaining viable suburbs. They provide a range of goods and services to local residents, and contribute to the character and vibrancy of many suburbs.

Generally the District Plan applies minimal restrictions in suburban centres to assist their efficient use and development. However in the case of the Newtown Suburban Centre the normal permissive management regime is tempered by the desire to maintain and enhance the area's nineteenth century character. Monitoring of the Newtown Suburban Centre indicates that the maintenance of the area's character has not been as effective as might have been expected. For this reason a number of amendments to the current provisions are proposed.

The changes do not significantly alter the core management philosophy for the suburban centre and are considered to be consistent with the existing Suburban Centre objectives and policies of the District Plan. No changes are therefore proposed to the objectives and policies.

6. Conclusions

The suburbs of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook have a distinctive local character derived from the retention of a high proportion of inner city residential housing dating from the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century. While the character and type of residential buildings in the southern inner residential area is not particularly rare, what remains is irreplaceable and important in defining the character of Wellington City as a whole.

Proposed District Plan Change 39 focuses on ensuring that new buildings and developments in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook recognise and enhance the existing character of the suburbs.

The changes do not seek to prevent or discourage residential intensification in Newtown Berhampore and Mt Cook, rather they seek to enhance the quality of new multi-unit developments and ensure that they are compatible with the existing character of the three suburbs.

The main shopping area in Newtown (which is focused on Riddiford Street) has been identified as having a distinctive nineteenth-century character that has been lost from most other suburban centres and which is important to the city's overall identity. To date the Council has sought to preserve this character by means of a design guide covering new buildings, and additions and alterations to existing buildings. While the guide does not require new developments to copy nineteenth century buildings, they must support the character of the area through the incorporation of certain design elements found in traditional commercial developments in the areas.

The purpose of this plan change is to update the content of the Newtown Suburban Centre Character Area Design Guide, review the extent of the character area, and review the areas of Newtown that are subject to the verandah and display window requirements in the District Plan.

Contact Officer: *Jeremy Blake,*
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Supporting Information

a) Strategic fit

In particular, the recommendations in this paper are consistent with the strategic outcomes and objectives relating to the Built Environment;

1.1 Liveable City

Wellington is a memorable, beautiful city, celebrating its distinctive landmarks, defining features and heritage.

1.4 Compact City

Wellington is a compact city with mixed land-use, structured around a vibrant city and suburban centres, and connected by major transport corridors.

The project is consistent with the Council Sense of Place initiative.

b) Annual Plan reference

Relates to updating the District Plan

c) Annual Plan and Long Term Financial Strategy implications

Nil. Project is part of the District Plan Team budget.

d) Treaty of Waitangi implications

There are no specific Treaty of Waitangi implications

e) Pre-Consultation

Internal:

- Strategy & Planning, Resource Consents
- Strategy & Planning, Principal Planner
- Strategy & Planning, Urban Designers
- Strategy & Planning, Forward Planning Team

External:

- Ngati Toa & Tenth's Trust (Te Atiawa)
- Greater Wellington (Regional Council)
- Ministry for the Environment
- Mail survey to all ratepayers in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook (October 2004)
- Workshop for Architects, Conservation Architects and Historic Places Trust (8 March 2005)
- Workshop for Newtown Residents Association (21 March 2005)
- Workshop for Mt Cook Residents (23 March 2005)
- Public Meeting (10 October 2005)
- Meeting with Newtown Residents Association representatives (31 October 2005)

f) Legal implications

None.