TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE WAIKATO DISTRICT MULTI-UNIT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

These guidelines provide direction for the community, landowners, developers and Council on how to achieve multi-unit development that responds to and promotes Council and community aspirations for sustainable growth.

Through the development of the Waikato District Plan, Waikato District Council has identified a variety of potential issues facing the district as it grows, including those relating to multi-unit development. Based on best practice design principles, the guidelines seek to build on the Council's objectives and policies within the Waikato District Plan, and form a tool to implement those polices. In this regard, the guidelines are intended to assist in the planning process by providing landowners and developers with a clear understanding of the design outcomes sought for multi-unit development throughout the district.

Definition of Multi-unit Development

Means multiple residential building or units which are planned and designed in an integrated and comprehensive manner and achieve compatibility between all buildings on a single site or multiple sites. Multi-unit Development may include: townhouses, apartments and duplexes. Should a public road be required as part of a multi-unit development subdivision, the relevant Subdivision Design Guidelines must also be referred to.

New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

The NZ Urban Design Protocol is a voluntary agreement between signatories, of which the Waikato District Council (5 October 2011) is one. It commits the signatories to specific urban design initiatives intended to raise the quality of urban design within their town or city. While non-statutory, the NZ UDP provides a mandate for the consideration of high quality urban design.

The Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities for signatories to consider as part of the day to day planning and design of their urban environments. These qualities are considered appropriate guiding principles for multi-unit residential development within the Waikato District and have informed the preparation of these guidelines.

1. Context – seeing that buildings, places and spaces are part of the whole town or city;
2. Character – reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment;
3. Choice – ensuring diversity and choice for people;
4. Connections – enhancing how different networks link together for people;
5. Creativity – encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions;
6. Custodianship – ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy; and
7. Collaboration – communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

2. HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are set out under key topic headings and structured to provide clear guidance in relation to the **outcomes sought** and **design guidelines** for achieving those outcomes. The outcomes sought explain the end result that Council is seeking to achieve, in response to the objectives and the policies of the plan; while the design guidelines outline recommended design approaches to achieve the outcomes sought. Each set of guidelines is supported by precedent images and diagrams to further assist in understanding how the outcome can be achieved.

Supporting Design Statements

Multi-unit development will require particular attention to design to deliver good standards of site amenity for residents, along with integrating with the surround neighbourhood. As part of a multi-unit development application, a **design statement** should be submitted to Council. This statement should:

- Outline the design justification of the proposal
- For larger scale development (i.e. 10 dwellings or more), a site and contextual analysis
- An assessment against the outcomes sought and design guidelines within this document
- Include supporting plans and cross sections, as required to illustrate how the proposal responds to the applicable outcomes sought and design guidelines.

Every application will be different and not all the outcomes sought and design guidelines will be relevant to the assessment of the proposed development application. Each development will be assessed on its merits taking into account its context and specific attributes. In addition, a degree of flexibility in relation to how the proposals responds to the guidelines is reasonable and to be expected. What is important is that the outcomes sought are clearly achieved and that this able to be demonstrated in the proposal.

Multi-unit Development Size

It is recognised that larger multi-unit developments will likely require more detailed assessment, including their relationship with the wider context. Accordingly, the applicability of the guidelines in this document have been broken down into the following categories:

Small (S) scale multi-unit development: Any multi-unit development consisting of 6 or less residential units and where each unit and its associated space is discrete to that unit (i.e. no communal pedestrian space is required).

Medium to Large (M-L) scale multi-unit development: Any multi-unit development consisting of 7 or more residential units.

Where guidelines are only applicable to medium to large development, this is indicated in brackets against the applicable guideline; In all other instances, guidelines shall be applicable to all scales, i.e. small, medium and large.

Relevant Supporting Documents

Waikato District council will develop master plans for towns. Master plans will enable the community to take a holistic and visionary look at each town that has been marked as a growth node. Master plans will take a multi-disciplinary approach where consideration will be given to existing developments, and how they will be transformed to meet long-term growth needs and the needs of each community. These design guidelines will inform the master planning approach; furthermore, each master plan will refine and provide distinct detail on outcomes sought for each town to complement the outcomes sought in these design guidelines.

The following references also provide further useful information relating to various aspects of subdivision design:

CPTED
National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in New Zealand, November 2005 (http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/towns-and-cities/national-guidelines-crime-prevention-through-environmental-design-new)

Universal Access Design
New Zealand Standard: Design for Access and Mobility – Buildings and Associated Facilities (https://www.standards.govt.nz/assets/Publication-files/NZS4121-2001.pdf)

Energy Efficiency
Compliance Document for New Zealand Building Code: Energy Efficiency (https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/building-code-compliance/h1-energy-efficiency/asvm/H1-energy-efficiency-3rd-edition-amendment-2.pdf)

Street Trees
Waikato District Council's District Tree Policy addresses issues relating to the recognition, strategic planning, management and long-term continuity of the tree resource within Waikato District, and provides policy in relation planting, maintenance, removal, subdivision and development, and planting within the road corridor.
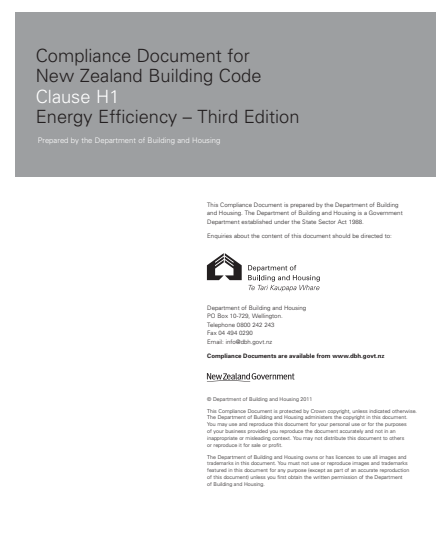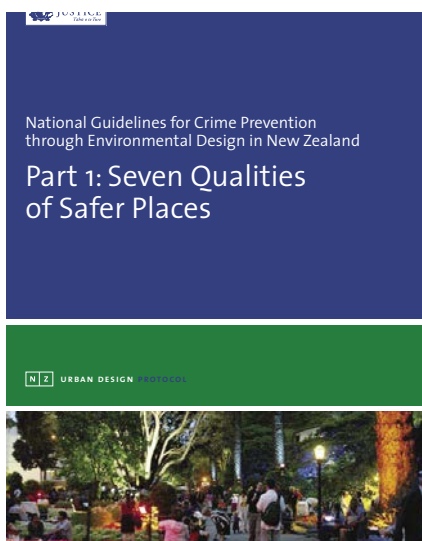
3. SITE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

For any multi-unit residential development, a site and contextual analysis is required to be submitted by the applicant as part of the overall design statement, to assist in understanding how the proposal responds to the specific site characteristics and overall site context. As a minimum, this should include one or more A3 maps or aerials, along with supporting notes, to adequately illustrate the following elements, as deemed applicable. Any assessment should be prepared in such detail as corresponds with the scale and significance of the potential effects that the development may have on the environment.

3.1   Overview

Careful site and context analysis can directly benefit future residents through better quality residential living outcomes which promote sustainability, functionality and amenity.

3.2   Outcomes Sought

A site and contextual analysis that assists to:
- Illustrate how the proposed development responds to:
  – Immediate urban and built context including pedestrian, cycle and vehicular networks; parks and areas of public open space; and adjacent buildings / surrounding land uses.
  – Any site specific elements that contribute to local sense of place and identity, e.g. native vegetation stands, significant trees, cultural sites, notable views.
  – Underlying natural and cultural character elements that can be integrated into the proposed design, e.g. drainage patterns, topography and vegetation.
  – Areas that are susceptible to natural hazards.
- Identifies the constraints and opportunities within and surrounding the site context, including a minimum 800m radius from the site.
- Identifies and, where relevant, provides detail of how the proposed development maximises the potential positive outcomes over the site, and avoids, remedies or mitigates any adverse effects.

3.3   Guidelines for site and contextual analysis

The following matters shall be considered as appropriate to scale and context of the proposed site and development proposal.

Landform and vegetation

- Identify those areas most suitable for dwellings, i.e. accessible, and not too steep.
- Identify prominent views, including those to coastlines or other waterbodies, prominent landmarks and natural areas.
- Identify areas susceptible to natural hazards, e.g. erosion and flooding.
- Identify significant vegetation within the site and adjoining area, including native vegetation and significant trees.

Land use and connectivity

- Where staging is anticipated, provide an outline of the staging approach, including how individual stages will be integrated with one another over the course of the project.
- Identify the surrounding walking, cycling and vehicular network and any potential opportunities for connections and links with public transportation, areas of public open space or other nearby community amenities.
- Identify adjoining land uses that are likely to detract from the amenity of the future residents/users, e.g. industrial land uses.
- Identify known archaeological and/or heritage sites, including their significance.

Immediate urban context

- Identify the proposals relationship to adjacent residential buildings – considering location of driveways, outdoor living areas, ancillary buildings, window placement - to analyse the proposal's effect on:
    - Acoustic and visual privacy
    - Access to sunlight and daylight.
- Identify characteristics of the existing streetscape, with particular regard to:
    - Dwelling setback from the street
    - Street address (entrances, fencing, garage placement)
    - Building heights
    - Roof form
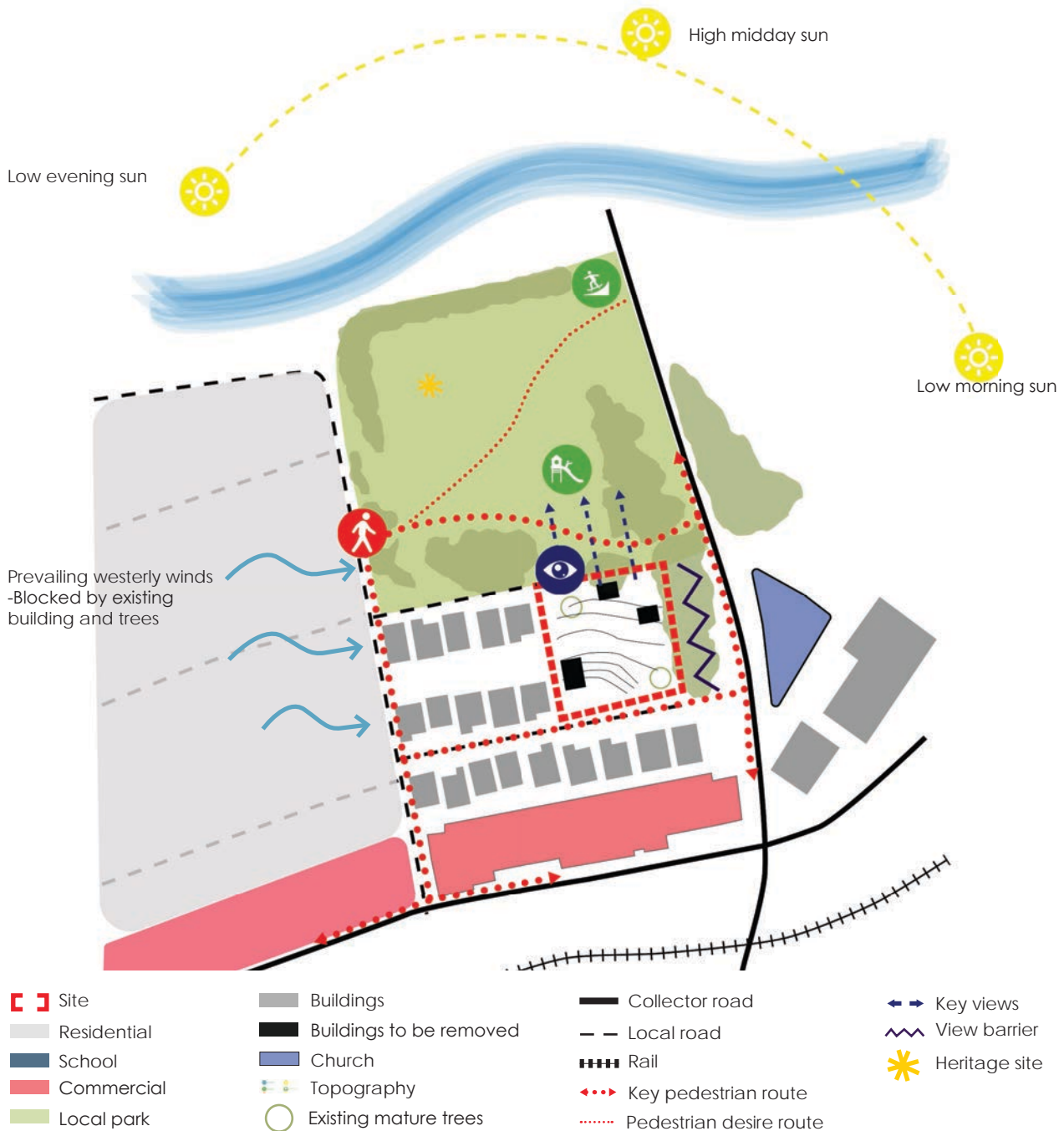   - Landscape treatment.

Figure 1.   Diagram showing elements that should be considered as part of multi-unit development analysis; the level of analysis will commiserate with the size and location of proposal.

4. MOVEMENT, ACCESS AND PARKING

4.1 Overview

A development that is connected to its surrounding neighbourhood and provides a safe interface between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles will help to ensure that it is an attractive place for residents and visitors alike.

4.2 Outcomes Sought

- Safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles on-site.
- Development design that promotes new residential areas that are conveniently connected to the surrounding context and local amenities.
- Clear orientation and signage aided by a logical layout and pedestrian network.
- Integrated access, car parking and garaging in a way that is safe for pedestrians and cyclists and does not dominate the development, particularly when viewed from the street or other public spaces.

4.3 Guidelines for Connectivity and Movement

Movement

- Provide good pedestrian, cycling and vehicular links to existing and proposed community amenities, including local shops, community facilities and public open space (M-L).
- Design pedestrian access ways in a manner consistent with 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' (CPTED) principles, facilitating passive surveillance and adequate lighting as far as possible, e.g. through low fences and clear sight lines between the public realm and adjoining land uses.
- Include 'universal access' design principles within design, maximising accessibility for all users.
- Design an internal movement network layout that is easy for people to orientate themselves within, i.e. a legible, simple, logical and connected layout (M-L).
- Maximise safety for pedestrians, by:
    – Providing dedicated pedestrian access to dwellings and areas of communal open space (demarcated through materials, colours and/or texture)
    – Minimising fence heights and maximising the transparency of boundary treatment (including landscaped areas) to ensure adequate eye-to-eye visibility is maintained for road users and pedestrians
    – Minimising the need for vehicular backing manoeuvres (i.e. by providing safe turning areas)
    – Managing speed through the pavement design and alignment variations.

Access and Parking

- Design an internal movement network that provides for dedicated vehicle access to each dwelling:
    – Use rear lanes for providing vehicular access for dwellings where vehicle access off a public street is difficult or if vehicle access from the public street compromises the pedestrian and visual amenity (M-L).
    – Use shared vehicular access layout for larger developments (M-L).
- Provide safe areas of off-street car parking with clear connections to dwellings, areas of communal open space and to the surrounding street network (M-L).

- Locate access points to prevent headlight glare into habitable rooms (M-L).
- Use different surface treatments to clearly demarcate vehicular entrances – textured surfaces can enhance local amenity while serving as a traffic calming device (M-L).
- For larger developments (i.e. 10 dwellings or more), enable sufficient residents' and visitors` parking by incorporating small pockets of additional off-street parking (M-L).
- For larger developments (i.e. 10 dwellings or more), locate bicycle parking/storage areas for residents and visitors in an area that is well lit, with good passive surveillance. For larger developments this should be a secured enclosure (M-L).

Pedestrian Paths
Vehicle Routes
Over looked
Parking

Figure 2.   Design pedestrian access ways in a manner consistent with 'Crime Prevention through environmental Design' (CPTED) principles, facilitating passive surveillance; provide dedicated pedestrian access to dwellings and areas of communal open space.

Pedestrian Paths
Vehicule Routes
Over looked
Parking

Figure 3.   Design an internal movement network that provides for safe circulation and dedicated vehicle access to each dwelling.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

5.1   Overview

Neighbourhoods should be distinctive and memorable, as well as functional and safe. Each development design has the potential to respond to the site and surrounding character elements, including consideration of adjoining neighbourhood character where appropriate. Multi-unit residential developments should not only create attractive places for people to live, but they should positively contribute to their surrounding streetscapes, neighbourhoods and be integrated within their communities.

5.2   Outcomes sought

• Multi-unit residential development contributes to establishing positive character outcomes through a design that is contextually appropriate and promotes local characteristics to contribute to community identity.

5.3   Guidelines for Neighbourhood Character

• Recognise and celebrate cultural and natural heritage elements by integrating them into the design. This may include (M-L):
  – Existing vegetation, e.g. native bush, riparian areas or significant tree
  – Natural features such as hills, wetlands, springs or streams
  – Archaeological sites
  – Sites of significance to local iwi
  – Heritage sites.
• Utilise an integrated design theme that respects the character of adjoining properties and provides visual quality and interest through:
  – Appropriate building orientation
  – Compatible building heights and architectural styles (including details such as roof pitch, degree of openness, building materials and design styles)
  – Consistent front setbacks and separation between buildings
  – Consistent fencing and boundary treatment (i.e. through fencing heights / materials, landscaping, configuration of pedestrian entrances)
  – Variations between adjacent dwellings that allows for each house to be recognized as unique.

Figure 4.   Precedent Image: Consistent front setbacks, fencing and boundary treatment

Figure 5.   Precedent Image: Consistent building form, including heights and architectural styles, adds positively to amenity and character.

Figure 6.   Precedent Image: Variations in materials between adjoining buildings while maintaining overall building form and location also adds positively to amenity and character.

6. STREET AND PUBLIC REALM INTERFACE

6.1 Overview

Where dwelling façades become a more visible and significant part of a developments public edge as a result of greater intensity of development, the relationship between the building and the public realm requires increased focus and careful consideration to manage the balance between private and public amenity.

6.2 Outcomes Sought

- Dwellings address streets and public places, enhancing the public realm and improve pedestrian safety and amenity.
- Development facilitates a clear transition between public and private realm, giving a sense of ownership to all spaces and elements.
- Development facilitates private-public interface areas that create opportunities for casual social interaction – enhancing a sense of community and integrating with the surrounding neighbourhood.

6.3 Street and Public Realm Interface Guidelines

Dwelling Address / Position

- Provide a clearly visible main pedestrian entry from the street or communal lane to each dwelling at ground floor level - conveniently located so as not to interfere with other uses of the street (on site services and the vehicle access) (M-L).
- Provide landscaped front yards to create a privacy buffer and contribute to the visual amenity of both private and public realm. This space should be a consistent element within the wider development.
- Align dwellings along this landscaped front yard setback. Variations in the setback and in the setback area design may be appropriate to provide visual interest and increased amenity to the building entry, but should not detract from the character of the surrounding streetscape.

Garage Placement and Car parking

- Reduce visual dominance of garages by:
– Setting the garage back from the main dwelling facade – so that it is a recessive element of the design
– Providing physical separation between the garage and the main dwelling entrance, to allow visibility for safe pedestrian access when a car is manoeuvring
– Providing variations in their design (forms, colours, materials)
– Providing a mixture of garages and carports to reduce the prevalence of blank façades.
- Incorporate parking into the developments landscape design - by extending planting and materials into the car park space and providing low level landscaping to soften and screen (M-L).

Passive Surveillance and Activation

• Maximise dwellings visual relationship to adjacent streets and public open spaces, through provision of balconies at upper levels. This is also encouraged to provide a sense of overlooking onto semi-public spaces, such as lanes and communal living areas.

Architectural form, massing and visual appearance

• Provide articulation in the façade that integrates with the surrounding residential context.
• Break up the visual dominance of multi-unit residential development by introducing (M-L):
  – Side setbacks to define breaks in the street wall
  – Roof form variation and occasional height changes.
• Create visual interest by utilising a consistent but varied material and colour palette.

Figure 7.   Precedent Image: Clearly visible front entrance.

Figure 8.   Precedent Image: Landscaped front yard / private open space.

Figure 9.   Precedent Image: Garage setback from main dwelling facade.

Figure 10.   Precedent Image: Unique garage design adding interest to the streetscape.

7. PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

7.1   Overview

Increasing the number of dwellings on a site has the potential to reduce the amenity of residents as well as affecting the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood. It is important to consider both the amenity values for the individual dwellings and their occupants, as well as the amenity values of the wider development and neighbourhood.

7.2   Outcomes Sought
•
• To maximise light access, views and privacy.
• To maximize the use and amenity opportunities of the site through a well-designed internal layout.

7.3   Guidelines

Solar Access
• Maximise northern aspect and minimise the number of southern aspect dwellings.
• Locate living areas to the north and service areas to the south and west of dwellings.

Private Open Space
• Design dwelling layouts to have an indoor-outdoor relationship, with private outdoor areas adjacent to living areas.
• Where private outdoor space is not achievable at ground-floor level, provide alternate outdoor living areas in the form of balconies, roof gardens roofs or through proximity to areas of communal open space (M-L).
• Ensure that outdoor living spaces have adequate privacy. Should an outdoor living space front the street or a public space, it is recommended that the private outdoor space is raised slightly to allow privacy without compromising passive surveillance.
• Provide sufficient and well orientated outdoor space for clothes drying areas.
• Avoid narrow and unusable side yards between buildings.

Acoustic and Visual Privacy
• Design adjacent dwellings to have compatible internal configurations (such as garages adjacent to one another, bathrooms on facing walls etc.) to minimise noise transference and reduce insulation costs.
• Orientate windows to maximise daylighting and outlook - without compromising dwelling privacy or the privacy of neighbouring dwellings.
• Use visual screening or landscaping to retain privacy and private outlook.

Facilities and services
• Allocate enough space for waste minimisation and recycling facilities, in a screened and easy to access place either within each property, or within shared storage enclosures (M-L).
• Ensure adequate storage space is provide for each residential unit, including for larger items such as bicycles and outdoor equipment.

Figure 11.   Dwelling layouts designed with a strong indoor-outdoor relationship at ground level (and above - through provision of balconies), garden areas private and well oriented for solar access.

- - - - - - Clothes dying area
- - - - - - Alternative outdoor living
- - - - - - Outdoor area adjacent to living area
- - - - - - Outdoor privacy

Figure 12.   Precedent Image: Front yard private open space design with a positive relationship to street.

8. COMMUNAL OPEN SPACES AND LANDSCAPE TREATMENT

Communal open spaces are an important amenity resource that provides outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and valuable 'breathing space' between dwellings in higher density developments. When appropriately located, sized and designed, communal open spaces provide opportunities for recreation and social interaction within a safe and attractive environment. Communal open space should be provided:

- For large scale multi-unit developments, i.e. 10 residential units or more
- Where private open space is unable to be adequately provided for, i.e. the provision is less than otherwise required by the district plan provisions; provided that any communal open space is readily accessible and a minimum of 15m2 private open space is retained for each individual unit.

8.1   Outcomes sought

- Communal open space is provided within developments, particularly where there may be limited private open space.
- Communal open space is conveniently located, appropriately sized to the need and development size, and safe, inclusive and accessible, providing a high standard of amenity for residents and visitors.

8.2   Guidelines for Open Space and Landscape Treatment

Communal Open Space

- Provide communal open spaces with edges that are activated or overlooked by adjacent streets, lanes or dwellings. This will improve the perceived safety and encourage use of these open spaces (M-L).
- Locate communal open spaces on flat land and provide for seating, shade, attractive landscape treatment and a play area for small children (M-L).
- Integrate proposed communal open spaces with the developments wider pedestrian network (M-L).
- Provide the possibility for a variety of recreational and social activities within communal open spaces (M-L).
- Incorporate existing significant vegetation where possible (M-L).
- Provide adequate lighting level in publically accessible spaces, for the visibility and safety of residents. Ensure that proposed lighting does not negatively impact neighbouring dwellings through light-spill (M-L).

Landscape Treatment

- Select appropriate trees to enable sunlight penetration to dwellings, streets and open spaces during winter months.
- Use different types of trees and vegetation to highlight the internal movement network / hierarchy and key destinations such as areas of communal open space (M-L).
- Ensure that any landscaping preserves any important views and vistas (M-L).
- Provide adequate grass berms or tree-pits to allow the trees to grow to maturity.

- Ensure plant species are well suited to local conditions. Where appropriate, use local native trees to enhance biodiversity.
- Ensure the trees have an appropriate height and canopy for the: location, width of street/lane, and ongoing maintenance (M-L).
- Avoid low shrubs or low canopy trees that block sightlines of pedestrians and vehicles (M-L).
- Consider the selection of deciduous trees that will block excessive sunlight during summer months, and lose their leaves in winter to allow for maximised solar access (M-L).

Figure 13.   Communal open space overlooked by surrounding dwellings, connected by a dedicated pedestrian network and providing for a range of recreational activities.

····· Pedestrian Paths
---- Over looked
Lighting
Playground
Picnic Table

Figure 14.   Precedent Image: Local park edged by a road and overlooked by dwellings.

Figure 15.   Precedent Image: Park offering a variety of activities for recreation, rest and play.