

APPENDIX 17C MULTIPLE UNIT HOUSING DESIGN ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Purpose of Appendix 17C

In the Residential 9 Zone the construction and use of multiple household units located within the Multiple Household Unit Overlay is defined as a restricted discretionary activity, provided that the development also complies with relevant Performance Standards. These include a maximum density performance standard of one household unit per 300m² of net site area.

In consideration of such applications the Council will have regard to:

“The extent to which the proposal is in accordance with the Multiple Unit Housing Design Assessment Criteria in Appendix 17C”.

In addition, these criteria will be used as appropriate in the consideration of discretionary activity applications involving household units and other residential activities.

In the Mixed Use 1 Zone residential development within the Neighbourhood Centre is a controlled activity provided that it is located at first floor level or above as a part of a mixed use development and is at a density of at least one dwelling per 350 square metres of net site area. In the balance of the Mixed Use 1 Zone, outside of the Neighbourhood Centre, housing development at a minimum density of one dwelling per 350 square metres of net site area is a restricted discretionary activity. All housing development in the Mixed Use 1 Zone is to be assessed against the assessment criteria in Appendix 17C.

Structure of Appendix 17C

The Appendix sets out the assessment criteria under seven “Design Elements”, which are also the design matters to which the Council’s discretion is restricted for restricted discretionary applications, namely:

- Location and Extent;
- Public Interface and External Appearance;
- Dwelling Design, Position and Orientation;
- Private Outdoor Spaces;
- Visual and Acoustic Privacy;
- Parking and Access
- Landscaping

The criteria listed under each Design Element are intended to give flexibility, enabling site responsive designs, while ensuring that residential development provides a positive contribution to the amenity of the Hingaia Structure Plan Area. Together, the criteria aim to ensure that the design of residential development responds to known and typical user needs for the development type e.g. for sunlight access, private space etc, while efficiently using the land resource to achieve wider growth objectives and maintaining elements of a generally open and spacious character of the Residential 9 Zone.

The criteria are intended to guide development rather than prescribe exact design and layout. Most criteria are illustrated. The illustrations are intended to support the text and are representative of good design solutions, but are not necessarily intended to represent the only design solution.

Each Design Element includes an explanation, which summarises the rationale for the particular Design Element and expands on the individual criteria. The explanation may be used as further guidance in interpreting the intention of the criteria and assessing the extent to which the proposal accords with them.

Information Requirements

The applicant shall provide a written assessment describing how the criteria for each Design Element are addressed. Applicants will have to demonstrate that the provisions of the criteria have been acknowledged.

It is recognised that certain proposals will not achieve absolute accord with all criteria. Where necessary, in regard to a criterion demonstrably not met, the applicant shall explain with reference to the explanation for the particular Design Element:

- whether site constraints inhibit the ability to address the criterion, and/or;
- how the intention of the criterion is met by the proposal, and/or ;
- whether the proposal represents a better design solution than that suggested by the criterion.

Applicants shall also provide a Landscape Concept Plan with sufficient detail to ensure that the criteria of Design Element 7 are able to be considered, identifying large grade specimen trees (species and planting size), groupings of ground covers and shrubs with species schedule, and fencing location, height and type.

Design Element 1: Location and Extent

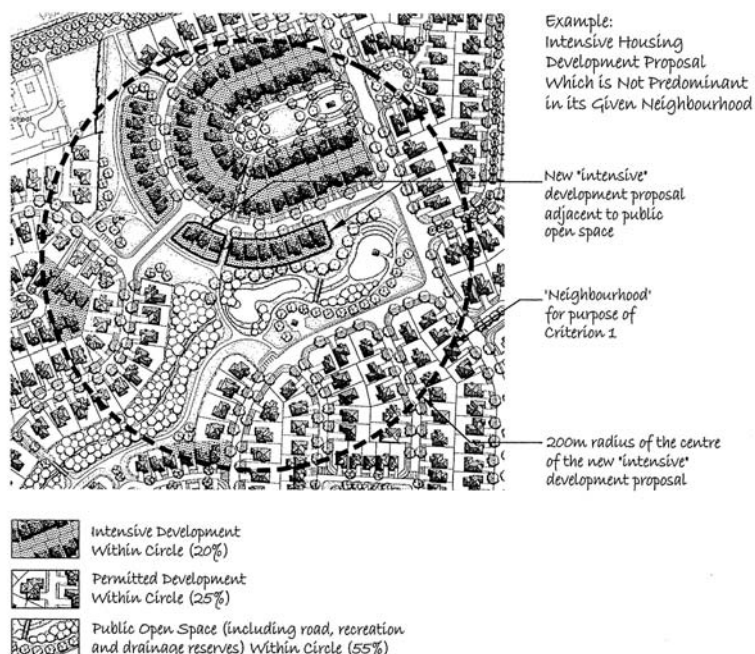
1. Location:

Multiple Unit Housing Developments should be located on sites with convenient and direct pedestrian access to the Neighbourhood Centre; and, either

- adjacent to, or on the opposite side of a road from, public open space (recreation or drainage reserves and riparian margins);

or

- on a site with frontage and with direct vehicular access to a principal or collector road;



2. Extent:

Intensive residential developments should not be the predominant development form in any given neighbourhood.

Explanation:

Extensive areas of multiple unit housing and other intensive residential development forms have the potential to compromise the open spacious character the Residential 9 Zone seeks to retain. Design Element 1 provides guidance in assessing the appropriate location and extent of Multiple Unit Housing developments and other forms of discretionary activity residential development.

Criterion 1 pertains specifically to the location of Multiple Unit Housing Developments. These are restricted to locations within a 800m radius of the focal point of the Nodal Area as shown on the Hingaia East Structure Plan, where they are likely to enable opportunities for walking and cycling to the Neighbourhood Centre. Outside this radius they are non-complying activities and not envisaged by the rules of the Plan.

Even within this radius it is important that Multiple Unit Housing Developments are located where they will clearly promote convenient and direct pedestrian access to the Neighbourhood Centre. An actual walking distance of 800m or less to the Focal Point may be used as a guide in assessment of this.

It is also important that the perceived intensity and scale of Multiple Unit Housing Developments can be mitigated by the presence of open space nearby. Ideally this should take the form of an open public space such as a reserve or riparian margin. Alternatively, a location adjacent to a wider road reserve such as on a collector or principal road, where it will also promote direct access to the Neighbourhood Centre, will also be suitable.

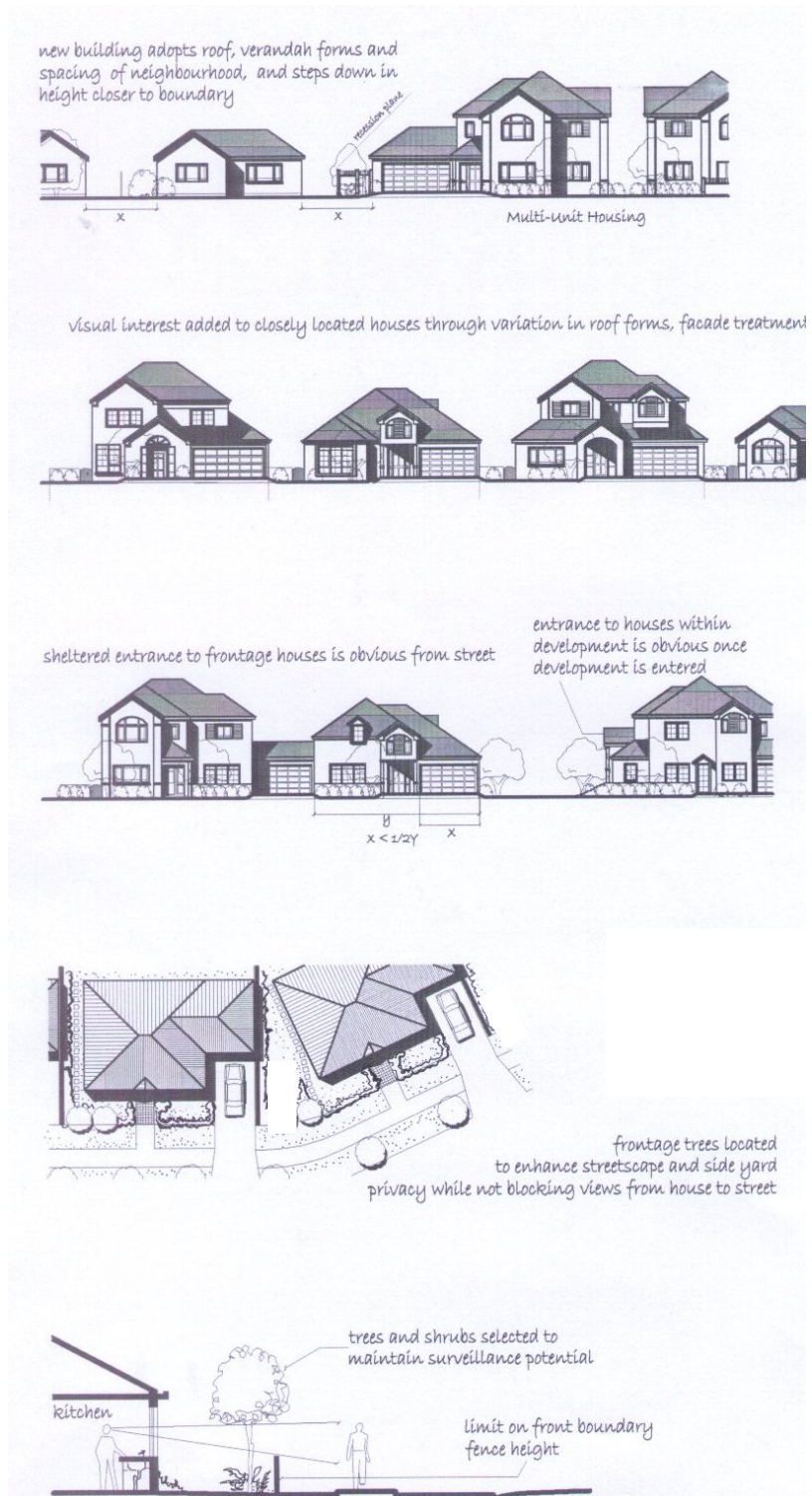
Proposals which are unable to fulfill either of these locational criteria will have to demonstrate the presence of a substantial level on-site open space either communally held or delineated around individual units - in practice be of a lower density than the maximum otherwise provided for under the Performance Standard for Density.

Other forms of residential development (for example retirement villages, and non-permanent accommodation such as motels) are discretionary activities throughout the Zone. Given their operational nature it is less important that they meet locational criteria.

However, it is important to ensure that the physical extent of more intensive forms of residential activity - be they retirement villages, motels or Multiple Unit Housing Developments - is not such that it becomes the dominant building form in any given neighbourhood. As a guide, in considering Criterion 2 the term "intensive" will be considered to mean proposals which achieve dwelling densities (or accommodation unit densities) of greater than one dwelling per 500m² net site area and the term "neighbourhood" will be measured relative to existing or envisaged development types, reserves and roads within a 200m radius of the centre of the new development proposal.

Design Element 2: Public Interface and External Appearance

1. A transition in height and scale between the new development and any neighbouring buildings should be provided.
2. When viewed from any public space buildings should create visual interest through articulation, roof form, openings, and variation, and avoid a continuous building frontage to the public space.
3. Every household unit should have a sheltered entry that is visible from the road if possible, or otherwise visible from the main public access to the development.
4. Garage doors should not dominate the road elevation, and should generally be set back further than the front face of the building.
5. Household units adjacent to a road or reserve should have at least one window from a living room, dining room or kitchen that enables views to the road or reserve.



Explanation:

Design Element 2 pertains to the public face of the built development – where it relates to the road or any other adjoining public space. Careful attention to design detail is required at this interface to avoid any adverse external visual, scale or safety effects, and to contribute positively to the amenity and enjoyment of the public space.

Integrating multiple unit housing and other residential development types into existing low density residential areas requires careful attention to the relationship with nearby properties and streetscape. Any consistency of scale, roof forms, and setbacks in the neighbourhood should be identified and reflected in the development. Careful consideration should be given to appropriate heights near the boundaries with neighbouring residentially developed properties, to achieve a suitable transition in scale.

In the Residential 9 Zone the opportunity is available for development to create its own unique character. Variation in design detail as viewed from public spaces enhances amenity through creating visual interest. In general this will be assisted by using openings, offsets in plan form, and a distinct roof form to provide interest and avoid monotony. Large blank walls facing public space should be avoided.

Ensuring that household units have clearly defined entrances adds to user safety and orientation, and provides a sense of address and identity for occupiers.

Avoiding over dominance of road elevations by garage doors and high front fences (particularly in single storey development) will contribute to pedestrian amenity.

Utilising only low (or no) fences, and tree species selected to maintain visual connection, and encouraging the design of houses so that living spaces overlook the road or reserve, contributes to public safety by enabling informal visual surveillance from the dwelling to the public place.

Details relating to fence and front yard treatment are addressed in more detail in Design Element 7: Landscaping.

Design Element 3: Dwelling Design, Position and Orientation

1. Buildings should be oriented and located to define external spaces that allow adequate daylight to dwellings and sunlight to main living rooms and private outdoor spaces.
2. As many household units as possible should be accessed generally from the south, and have a more private “face” to the north.
3. Main living rooms should be located on the northern or northwestern side of the household unit.
4. Buildings should be positioned to minimise overshadowing or visual domination of adjoining private outdoor spaces.
5. As many household units as possible should front onto and be accessed from road. Where the site precludes this, household units should front onto a central shared accessway directly linked to the development’s public entrance.

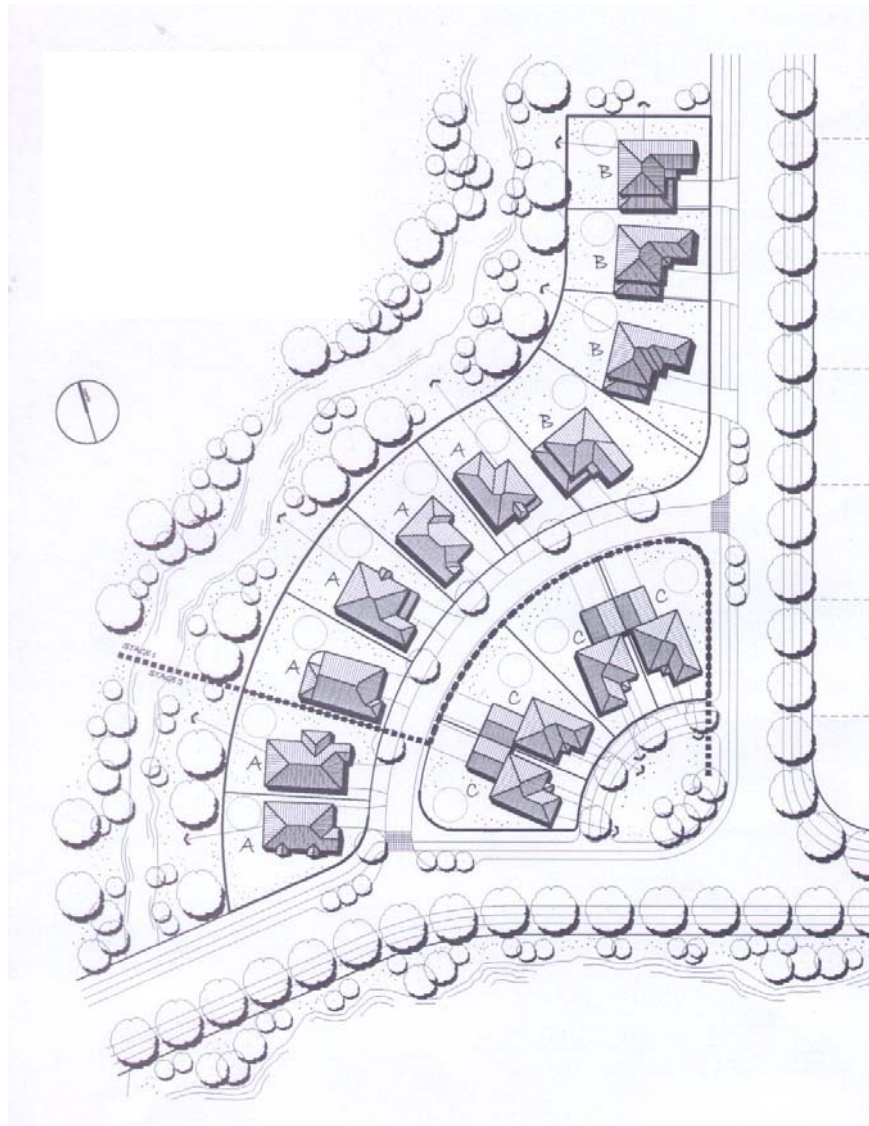


ILLUSTRATION - MULTIPLE UNIT HOUSING
 (14 dwellings - density 1 per 400 m² of net site area)

— original site

→ view

○ private outdoor space

A Detached housing accessed from access lot with views to reserve

B Zero lot line housing accessed from access lot with views to reserve

C Semi-detached housing accessed from access lot with pedestrian entries visible from public road

6. Household units should be positioned and openings designed to capitalise on any views that are available.
7. Site layouts should retain any existing mature trees on site where these contribute to existing site amenity.
8. Dwellings should not generally be joined together except in pairs at garages.

Explanation:

Design Element 3 pertains to principles for consideration in the overall layout of a site for household units and other permanently-occupied residential development types. The general positioning and organisation of buildings on a site and the shape, orientation and detail of the space around them is often a principal determinant of the quality and amenity of developments.

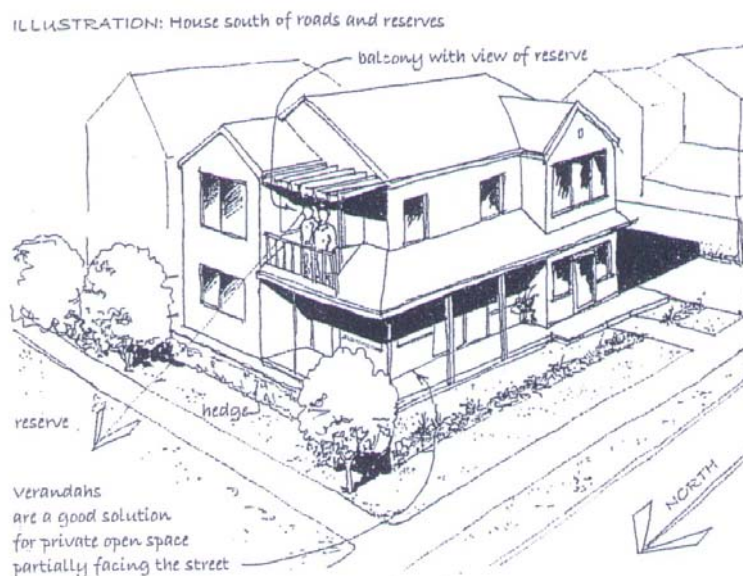
Adequate daylight and sunlight to habitable rooms and outdoor spaces maintains amenity and energy efficiency. A useful first principle in achieving solar access to household units is by plan layouts with access and service rooms on the south of the building, and living spaces (indoor and outdoor) on the north side. Where this is not possible, the availability of some outdoor space which receives direct sunlight (eg. a balcony) will be considered. Site and building planning for all residential development should also take advantage of views (pre-existing and created by the development) - both distant views and local views to public spaces (reserves and roads) preferably from main living spaces. Layouts that incorporate existing mature trees can also ensure an “instant amenity” and so are encouraged.

The intention of maintaining elements of a spacious character is embodied in many policies relevant to the Residential 9 Zone. Continuous rows of buildings, such as terraced housing, are likely to be detrimental to this, and should not be utilised.

The criteria can impose contradictory requirements on some sites. For example, where the road frontage is directly to the north of the site it is more difficult to meet criteria related to sunlight access and private open space and criteria seeking to maximise the number of units accessed directly from the road. Where there is a conflict between only two criteria, they should be regarded as being listed broadly in order of importance.

Design Element 4: Private Outdoor Spaces

1. Every household unit should be provided with flat private outdoor space located to the north, east or west of the household unit and directly accessible from it.
2. Private outdoor space should be at ground level if possible. It may be provided in part or whole as balconies or roof decks, where overlooking of the private outdoor space of other units is avoided or limited.
3. Private outdoor space should not generally be positioned solely at ground level between the household unit and any road boundary.
4. Private outdoor space should be of a size to suit both probable occupancy and dwelling type, and having regard to the availability of storage space, the availability of shared open space within the development, and the proximity of the site to a public reserve.
5. Private outdoor space should be well proportioned for its envisaged uses.



Explanation:

Design Element 4 pertains to principles for the provision of on-site outdoor space directly associated with household units and units within other permanently-occupied residential development types. A sufficient quantity of well-sited and carefully detailed private outdoor space greatly increases the amenity of a dwelling and, by implication, the neighbourhood. Private outdoor space increases the range of activities that people can enjoy in and around their home, can accommodate both recreational opportunities and, if necessary, servicing and storage requirements. Ideal characteristics for private open space are direct connection to the household unit, orientation generally to the north or northwest, and freedom from overlooking.

Private outdoor space should be located at ground level. Balconies and roof decks are also often a good solution for additional open space on the northern side of household units located near and south of a boundary with a road or reserve, enabling views of the public space without the need to erect screen fences on the boundary.

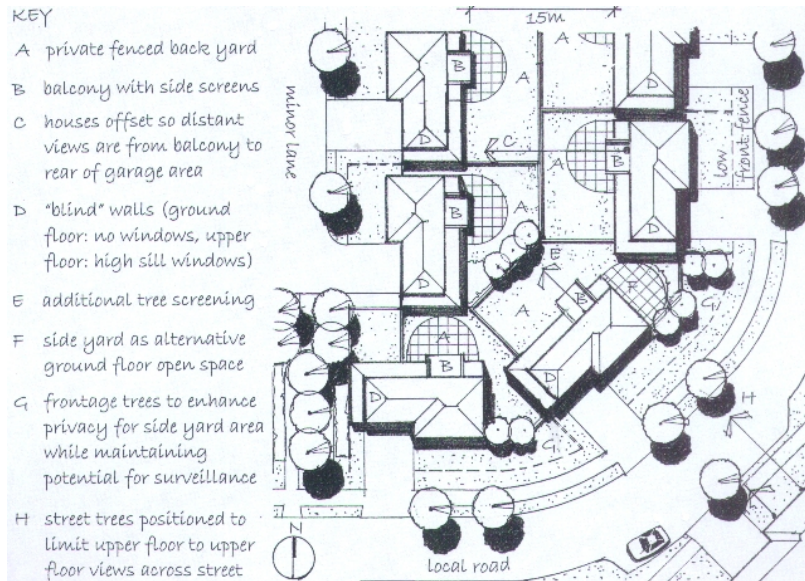
Private outdoor space should be of a generous size to suit probable occupancy and dwelling type and to help maintain building separation. For example, housing intended for an elderly market, and housing with one or two bedrooms will likely require only a minimum quantity of space, whereas family housing will require a greater area for realistic play. At ground level a minimum provision of 80m² of usable space is considered appropriate for most housing types in the Residential 9 Zone. In the Mixed Use 1 Zone, rules apply in addition to these general design assessment criteria because of the likelihood of a higher density of residential development and the consequential need for rules to ensure that a minimum level of amenity values is created on-site. Accordingly, in the Mixed Use 1 Zone, Rule 17.2.5.16 recognises that high density development in a mixed use context will require a different type of private outdoor space. In the Mixed Use 1 Zone generally a minimum of 36m² of private outdoor space at ground level or a small balcony with an area of at least 8m² will be appropriate for the lifestyle expectations of people within the mixed use environment. Regard should also be had for any other functions that might be required of the space – for example, additional allowance should be made for outdoor storage where there is no garage or other obvious internal storage area. When considering proposals involving small spaces, particular consideration should be given to the availability of shared open space or leisure facilities either within the development, or on immediately adjacent to public reserves. Quite small spaces will be acceptable associated with proposals that show attention to design detail and include a mixture of opportunities designed into the outdoor space.

Proportion is as important as area. As a guide, in the Residential 9 zone, a minimum dimension in any direction of 5m should be maintained at ground level, and 3m for balconies or roof decks. In the Mixed Use 1 Zone, a minimum suitable dimension for ground level private open space is 6m, and for balconies is 1.5m, as required by Rule 17.2.5.16. It may be useful to think of designing the open space and its landscaping as similar to creating an “outdoor living room”, in terms of dimension, scale and orientation.

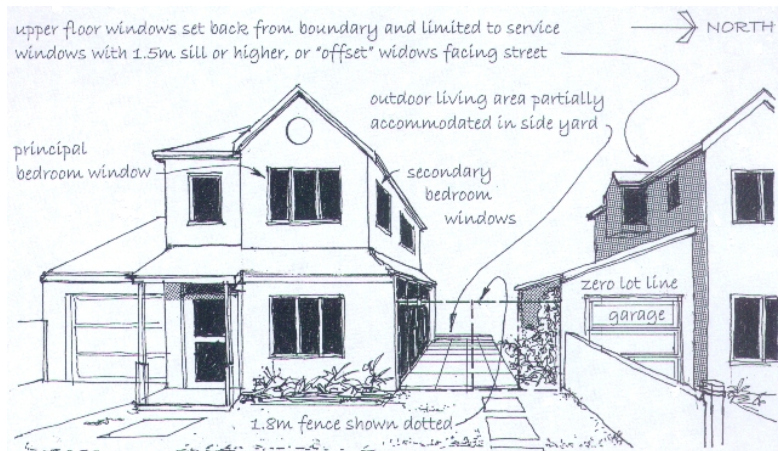
Design Element 5: Visual and Acoustic Privacy

1. Ground level private outdoor space should be protected from being overlooked from windows and private outdoor spaces of adjacent household units through the use of the following design devices:

- the shape and position of buildings, spaces and windows;
- separation distance;
- intervening screening, e.g.:
 - fences 1.6m to 1.8m high; (not on a road boundary)
 - dense trees, planting or hedges;
- screening devices on balconies;
- offset and high sill windows;
- obscured and restricted-opening windows (service rooms only).



2. Direct views from the windows of one household unit into the windows of another should be avoided or minimised, through the use of the design devices cited for Criterion 1, as applicable.



3. Acoustic privacy between household units should be enhanced by separation between openings, effective solid acoustic screening, and by separating the noise sensitive spaces (such as bedrooms) of one unit from the service rooms, garages and parking areas of another.

Explanation:

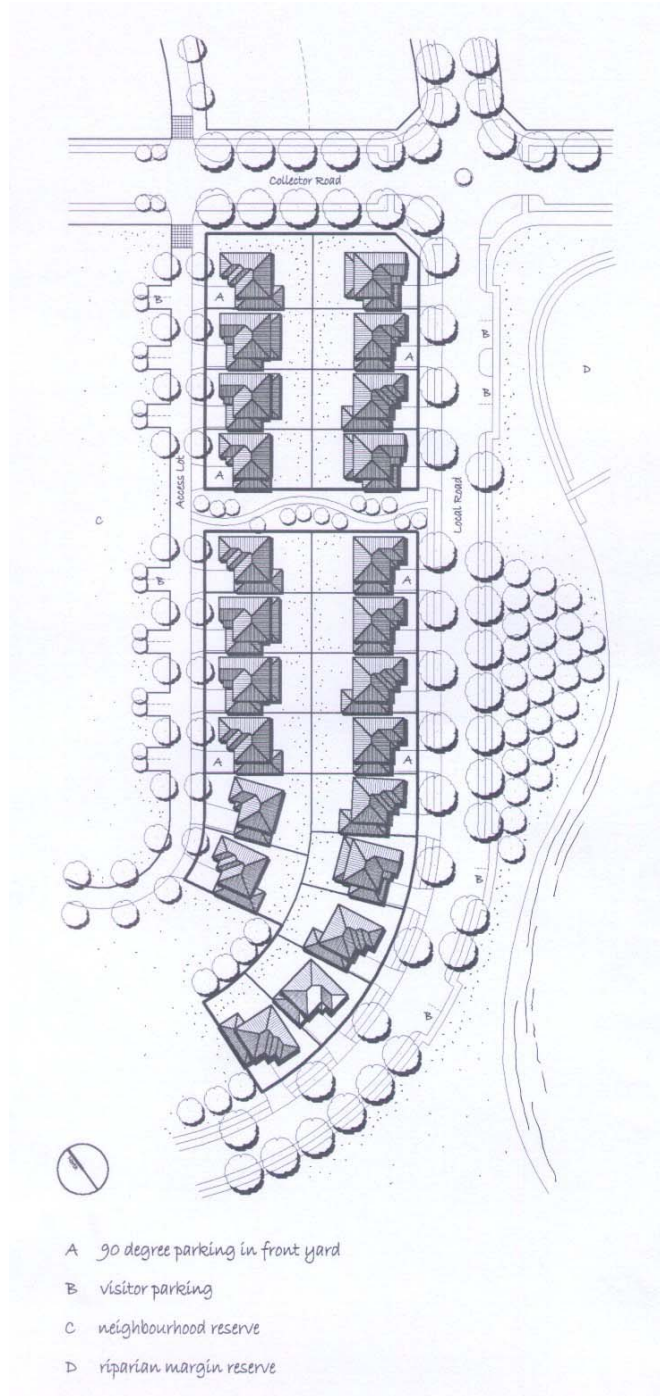
Design Element 5 sets down considerations for appropriate levels of privacy for household units and their private outdoor spaces. Maintaining the amenity associated with visual and acoustic privacy can be a big challenge in the design of multiple unit housing. Design devices which can be used to avoid or minimise adverse privacy effects are included in Criterion 1, and should be regarded as being listed in order of preference i.e. it is best to avoid or minimise adverse privacy effects, rather than rely heavily on mitigation such as screening or obscured glazing. Where a site adjoining the development site is already developed for residential activities particular regard should be had to maintaining the visual and acoustic privacy of the existing household units.

Protection of private outdoor spaces from all possible sources of overlooking will not often be absolute. For example, if a ground level private outdoor space abuts a reserve it will usually be more desirable to achieve views from the space to the reserve at the expense of some privacy for the outdoor space. Hedges and soft landscaping are a good solution for such situations. Regard should also be had to the day-to-day likelihood of overlooking - for example, overlooking might be acceptable if a viewer must stand at the edge of a balcony to glimpse a private outdoor space, or if an overlooking window serves only a bathroom or circulation space.

However, privacy directly between windows of dwellings should generally be achieved through use of the above design devices, and should be considered for all walls on adjacent dwellings at a plan angle of between 0 degrees (parallel) and 135 degrees. Separation distance between windows is often one of the few design devices available, especially for upper floor windows, and in more intensive developments separation distances that are greater than that which might be achieved in a low density permitted activity situation may be required. As a guide, a distance of 15m should be maintained between any upper floor windows to habitable rooms on dwellings facing each other in a “private-back-to-private-back” situation, and of 12m between dwellings facing each other across a publicly accessible space. This separation distance may be substantially reduced where the other design devices are used effectively. However, even when no direct view between them is available, the shortest distance between opening windows to habitable rooms on separate dwellings should be at least 2m for acoustic privacy. Criterion 3 considers further design devices that should be used to enhance acoustic privacy in addition to those covered by The New Zealand Building Code.

Design Element 6: Parking and Access

1. Use of space on the development site for the turning and maneuvering of vehicles should be minimised.
2. Garages and outdoor parking spaces for multiple household unit developments should be located adjoining or in close proximity to, and visible from, the unit they serve.
3. Outdoor parking spaces, shared vehicle access routes and any pedestrian routes on site should be well lit for night-time visibility and security.
4. Multiple outdoor parking spaces on the front 10m of any site abutting a road should be generally avoided, unless the spaces are designed and positioned to minimise visual impact on the streetscape.
5. Outdoor parking and access areas serving more than two household units should include attractive hard and soft landscape features where visible from publicly accessible locations.
6. On-site visitor parking that is easily located and identified by unfamiliar users should be provided for larger developments.



Explanation:

Design Element 6 pertains to the design of vehicular and pedestrian access and parking, which should be considered integrally with overall site design. Use of on-site space for the turning and manoeuvring of vehicles should be minimised by the use of direct vehicular access onto roads (with safe reversing) for individual units and smaller developments, and by the use of looped internal roads for larger developments.

Parking spaces in multiple household unit developments should be in close proximity to the household unit they serve for convenience and security. Where parking spaces in residential developments are not in close proximity, the links between parking spaces and households should be well lit. Lighting could range from motion-activated directional security lights for small developments, through to bollard mounted path lights and directional spot lights for larger developments. Broad spread flood lighting should be avoided. Where parking is separated from houses and provided in any form of communal space, the Council will generally require information on lighting at building consent stage if it is not provided with a resource consent application.

The intention of maintaining elements of a spacious green character is embodied in many policies relevant to the Residential 9 Zone. Large vehicle parking areas abutting the public street is unlikely to assist in achieving this. The intention of Criterion 4 is to minimise the proportion of the front of the site taken up by vehicle parking, so accordingly the utilisation of the driveway space in front of a garage or beside a household unit for more than a single outdoor parking space is not encouraged. In general, to meet this intention any single parking space should also be oriented close to right angles to the road, and other outdoor parking in the front 10m of the site should be avoided. Larger parking areas generally should not be located near the road frontage, and should be appropriately landscaped or otherwise screened by buildings when viewed from the road.

On-site visitor parking should be considered particularly where specific parking provision for units is limited, for larger developments, and for developments not directly accessed from the road, and it should be located with regard to the safety and ease with which it can be located by an unfamiliar visiting driver.

Design Element 7: Landscaping

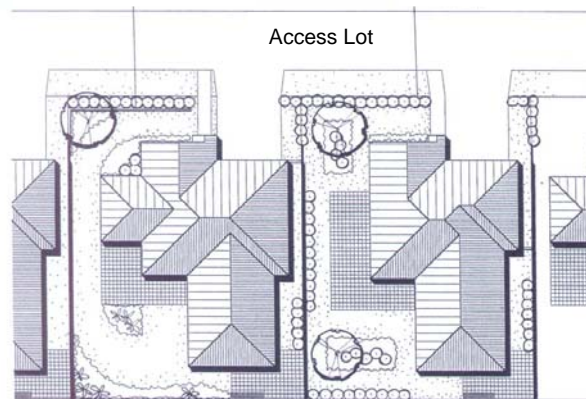
1. Soft landscaping proposals should be concentrated along boundaries with public space and along boundaries of or frontages to an established area with rural-residential development.
2. Fences or walls along any road frontage and between the road frontage and the front of buildings on site should be avoided or limited to no greater than 1.2 metres in height.
3. Plant borders may be used along any road frontage provides they maintain open sight lines between the 1.2 and 2.5 metre height.
4. Fences and walls, other than low open rail fences, along any reserve frontages should generally be avoided.
5. Plant borders should be used along any reserve frontage. Open sight lines between the 1.2 and 2.5 metre heights should be maintained and plant species should be selected so that they are in context with species used within the reserve.
6. At least 60% of the front 5 metres of any site should be developed as soft landscape, i.e. grassed or planted.
7. The style and materials used for any walls or fences within the front yard area should relate directly to the style and materials of the architectural proposal. Close boarded timber fencing should not be utilised in these locations.
8. All landscape proposals for front yard areas should be designed with regard to where street trees are located.
9. Proposed specimen trees should be utilised in all proposals and selected so that their expected mature size is in proportion with the scale of the proposed building.
10. At least half of the building frontage should have a planted strip in front of it, comprising of groundcovers and/or shrubs.



Low fence wall or planting strip (less than 1.2m high)

Local Reserve

Low plant strip on portion of building frontage



Explanation:

Design Element 7 pertains to landscaping principles for consideration in the overall layout and composition of multiple unit housing developments, with a particular focus towards the front yard areas. Many of the criteria above provide further means of achieving some of the intentions of criteria detailed within Design Element 2: Public Interface and External Appearance.

The front yard area plays an important role in successfully managing the transition from the public street space to a house's interior private space, and the composition of the rear or side of a site is also important when the rear or side boundary abuts a public space (reserve or street).

Maintaining the ability for informal surveillance over public space from the closest buildings on site is an important feature that will further enhance the success of residential development in the Residential 9 zone. The restriction in height of walls and fences addresses this issue, allowing open space sight lines while recognising that soft landscaping along boundaries with public space and along boundaries of sites bordering or fronting on to existing rural-residential properties may be appropriate in order to maintain or enhance the rural-urban- interface amenity values.

Planting borders are preferred to solid structures along lot boundaries as they help to establish a soft transition. Likewise the 60% soft landscaping of the front yard is recommended to establish a soft transition and to maximize green space.

To enhance a development's integration with its surroundings it is preferable that plant species or themes selected for areas fronting public spaces are in keeping or complementary to species used within that public space e.g. native species should be chosen where specimen trees are native.

In general the composition and selection of materials for any built structure e.g. fences, walls, pergolas, gates or hard surfaces e.g. paved areas and/or driveways should appear as an extension of the house's architectural style. This helps maintain a quality development within the front yard and allows a house's architectural style to better contribute to the streetscape character.

To avoid character conflict of vegetation (within the streetscape or other public spaces) and/or canopy over crowding and excessive shadowing the location and species of street trees or specimen trees should be identified and taken into consideration while detailing any landscape proposal. As a guide specimen trees should be greater than 2 metres in height at implementation and generally spaced so that there is at least one new specimen tree per 10 metres of the street frontage, either being provided for within the front yard or the road reserve.

