

**APPENDIX 16C MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING, DESIGN ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

**PURPOSE OF APPENDIX 16C**

In the Residential 8 Zone the following are defined as restricted discretionary activities:

“Medium Density Housing Development” (a residential development comprising four or more household units on a site with a minimum area of 1400m<sup>2</sup> and at a density of greater than one household unit per 350m<sup>2</sup> of net site area), where the performance standards of 16.1.7 are met; and

"Retirement Villages and Homes for the Aged, complying with the performance standards of 16.1.7; and

Residential development at a density greater than one household unit per 350m<sup>2</sup> of net site area on a site of less than 1400m<sup>2</sup>, where the performance standards of 16.1.6 are met.

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

“The extent to which the proposal is in accordance with the Medium Density Housing Development Design Assessment Criteria in Appendix 16C”.

In addition, these criteria will also be used as appropriate in the consideration of discretionary activity applications involving household units (for example, a Medium Density Housing Development where one or more of the performance standards of 16.1.7 are not met).

**STRUCTURE OF APPENDIX 16C**

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

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

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

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 accordance 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:

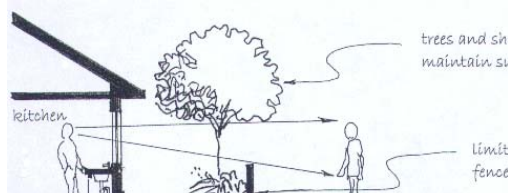
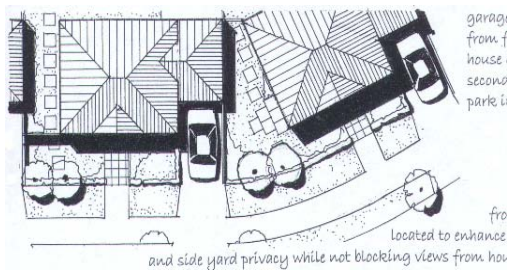
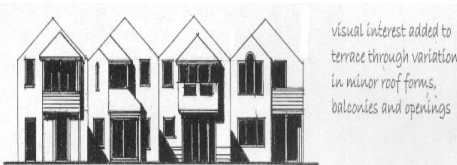
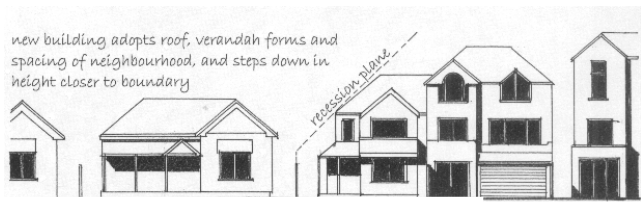
whether site constraints inhibit the ability to address the criterion, and/or;

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.

**Design Element 1: 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.
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. Fences or walls along any road or reserve boundary and between the road and the front face of the closest building should be generally avoided or limited in height.
6. Soft landscaping proposals should be concentrated along public space boundaries, with species selected to maintain views between the dwellings and public space.
7. 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 1 pertains to the public face of the 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 medium density housing into existing 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 8 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. Blank walls facing public space should be avoided.

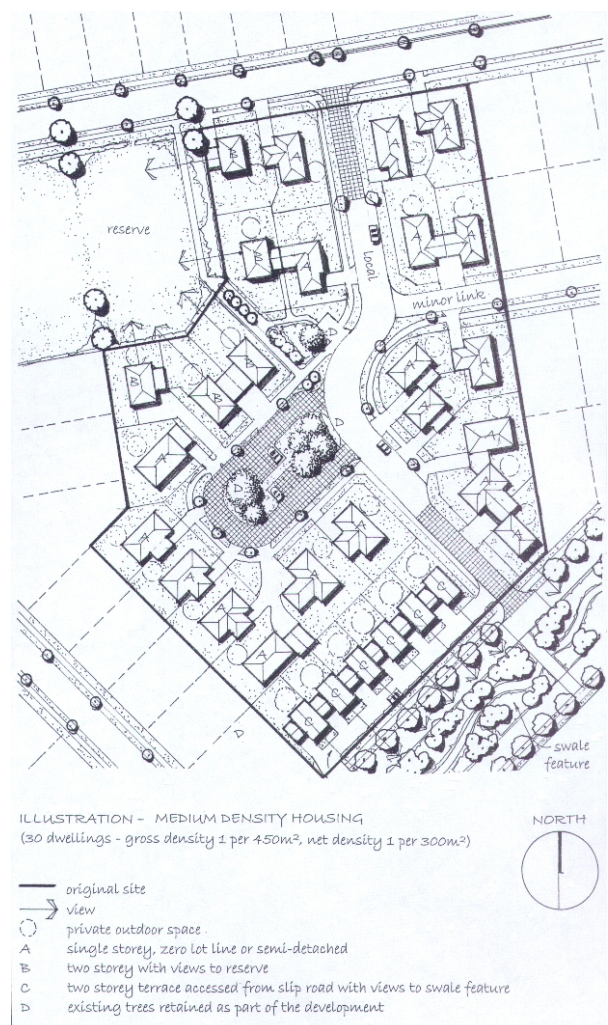
Ensuring that household units have clearly defined entrances adds to user safety and orientation, and provides a sense of address and identity for occupiers.

Avoiding over dominance of road elevations by garage doors and high front fences (particularly in single storey development) will contribute to pedestrian amenity. The degree to which the proposal complies with the road frontage interface standards in Rule 16.1.6.3 may be used as a guide, though more flexibility for some of the household units in larger developments is appropriate.

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. This is important where properties abut Bruce Pulman Park.

## Design Element 2: 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 and should be located with a minimal setback. Where the site precludes this, household units should front onto a central shared accessway directly linked to the development’s public entrance.
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.



### Explanation:

Design Element 2 pertains to principles for consideration in the overall layout of a site for residential development. 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.

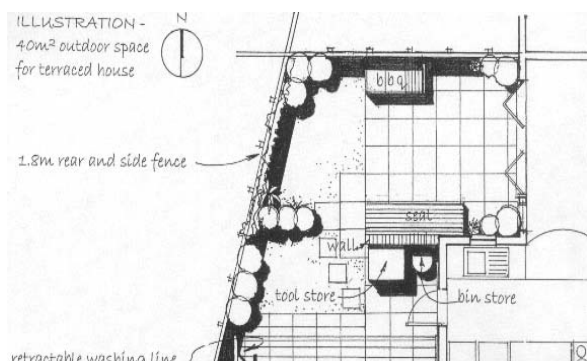
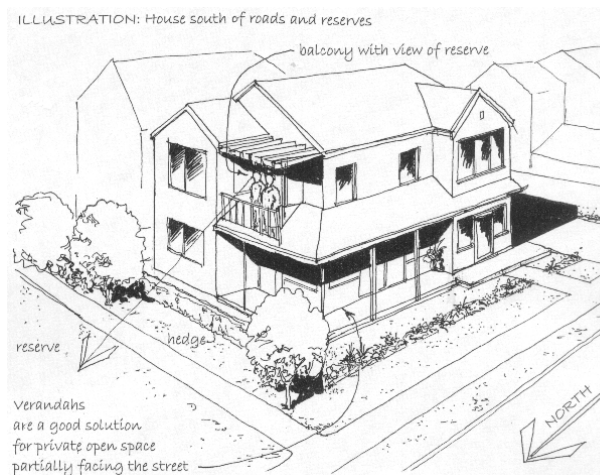
Maximising the number of units fronting the street and minimising their setback adds to safety and orientation. The degree to which the proposal complies with the standards in Rule 16.1.6.3 may be used as a guide in assessing a proposal in terms of Criterion 5.

Site and building planning 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 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 3: 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, (particularly for household units located substantially above ground floor) 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 3 pertains to principles for the provision of on-site outdoor space directly associated with each household unit. 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.

In general, private outdoor space should be located at ground level. Where this is not possible a balcony, roof deck or other design solution should be provided for each household unit. Balconies and roof decks are also often a good solution 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 size to suit both probable occupancy and dwelling type. For example, apartments, 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 range of anything between 35m<sup>2</sup> and 60m<sup>2</sup> might be considered appropriate though an average provision over a development should generally be at the upper end of this range. 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 public reserves. Quite small spaces will also likely be acceptable associated with proposals that show attention to design detail and include a mixture of opportunities designed into the outdoor space.

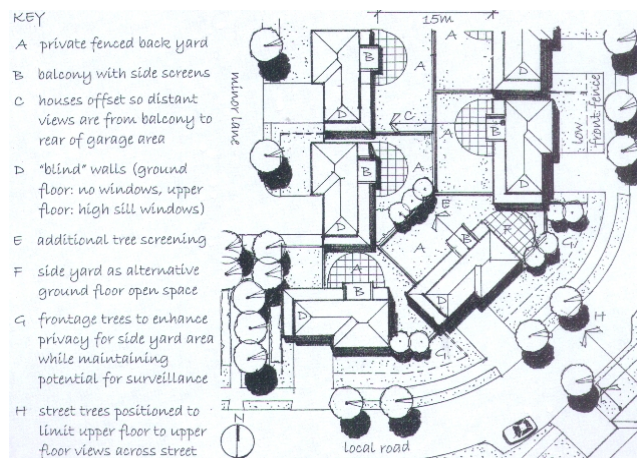
Proportion is as important as area. As a guide, a minimum dimension in any direction of 5 metres should be maintained at ground level, and 3 metres for balconies or roof decks. It may be useful to think of designing the open space and its landscaping as similar to creating an “outdoor living room”, in terms of dimension, scale and orientation.

#### Design Element 4: 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.:
  - o fences 1.6 metres to 1.8 metres high; (not on a road boundary)
  - o 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:**

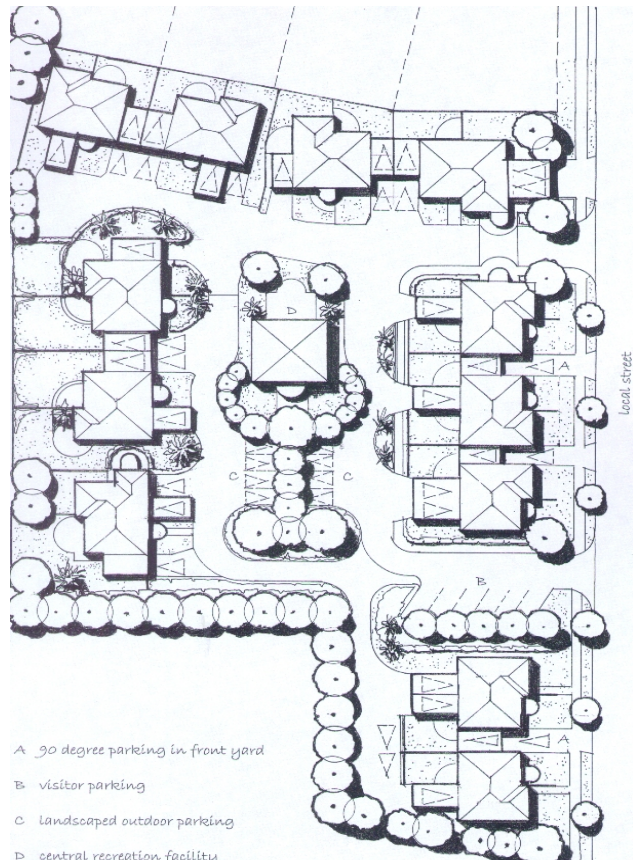
Design Element 4 sets down considerations for appropriate levels of privacy for household units and their private outdoor spaces. Maintaining the amenity associated with visual and acoustic privacy is one of the biggest challenges in the design of medium density housing. Design devices which can be used 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 15 metres 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 12 metres 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 2 metres 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 5: Parking and Access

1. Use of space on the development site for the turning and manoeuvring of vehicles should be minimised.
2. Garages and outdoor parking spaces should be located adjoining or in close proximity to, and visible from, the household 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. Outdoor parking spaces on the front 10 metres of any site abutting a road should be generally limited, 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 hard and soft landscape features that provide an attractive outlook 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 5 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 should be in close proximity to the household unit they serve for convenience and security, and 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. The Council will generally require information on lighting at building consent stage if it is not provided with a resource consent application.

Where a household unit has frontage to the road, the utilisation of the driveway space in front of a garage or beside a household unit for a single outdoor parking space is an efficient use of land, and is encouraged. However, where the parking is arranged so the vehicles are parallel to the road, or where there are multiple vehicles parked in this area, the presence of the vehicle(s) can create an adverse streetscape and security effect. The intention of Criterion 4 is to minimise the proportion of the front of the site taken up by vehicles. In general, to meet this intention any parking space should be oriented close to right angles to the road, and outdoor parking in the front 10 metres of the site should be limited to one space per household unit in any contiguous paved area. Larger parking areas generally should not be located near the frontage, and should be appropriately landscaped.

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.

*This page intentionally blank*

