

20 May 2022

Urban Design Hearing Statement

1.0 **Introduction**

My name is Jaime Devereux. I am a Director of Urban Edge Planning Limited and work one day a week for Wellington City Council under contract as an Urban Design Advisor in the Design Review Team. In this role, my key task includes undertaking urban design assessments of resource consent applications and reviewing them against the design related provisions of the District Plan.

1.1 I have a bachelor's degree in Architecture from Victoria University of Wellington, a Master of Resource and Environmental Planning from Massey University, and a Certificate in Landscape Design from Southern Institute of Technology. I have six years of experience as an architectural designer, approximately five years as a planner, and four years of experience as an urban design advisor for Councils (including Upper Hutt City Council, Hutt City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, and Wellington City Council).

1.2 I confirm that I have read the submissions and have referenced key issues raised in the submissions within this report.

1.3 I have read, and am familiar with, the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014. Unless where stated within my report, the evidence which I present is within my area of expertise.

2.0 **Description of the proposal**

The proposal comprises the removal of an existing two storey residential building containing two residential units (one on the lower level and the other on the upper level) at 292 Main Road, Tawa. The site is located on the corner of Main Road and McLellan Street, with public open space to the south of the site and a steep vegetated bank to the west, both of which are physically separated from the site by McLellan Street and Main Road respectively.

2.1 The Porirua Stream runs along the eastern boundary of the site and has ecological and amenity value. It is the only stream that has specific rules for development adjacent to it in the District Plan. According to the Land Air Water Aotearoa (LAWA) website, Porirua Stream ‘*supports six species of native fish, which are longfin and shortfin eels, giant kokopu, inanga, redfin and common bullies. However, the stream also exhibits many of the characteristics of an urban stream, including bank erosion, lack of riparian vegetation and channelisation*’.

2.2 The banks of the river, within and adjacent the site, are vegetated, with a mix of grass, shrubs, and trees (refer to figure 1). Existing views from the site to the neighbouring property across the river at 1 Nathan Street are partially screened by taller trees and vegetation towards the top of the riverbank (refer to figure 2), whereas views are very open and clear to the property at 3 Nathan Street, with only grass or low-level vegetation between the application site and this neighbour (refer to figure 3). The neighbouring site to the north (292/A Main Road) is elevated above the application site and further separated by a timber fence.

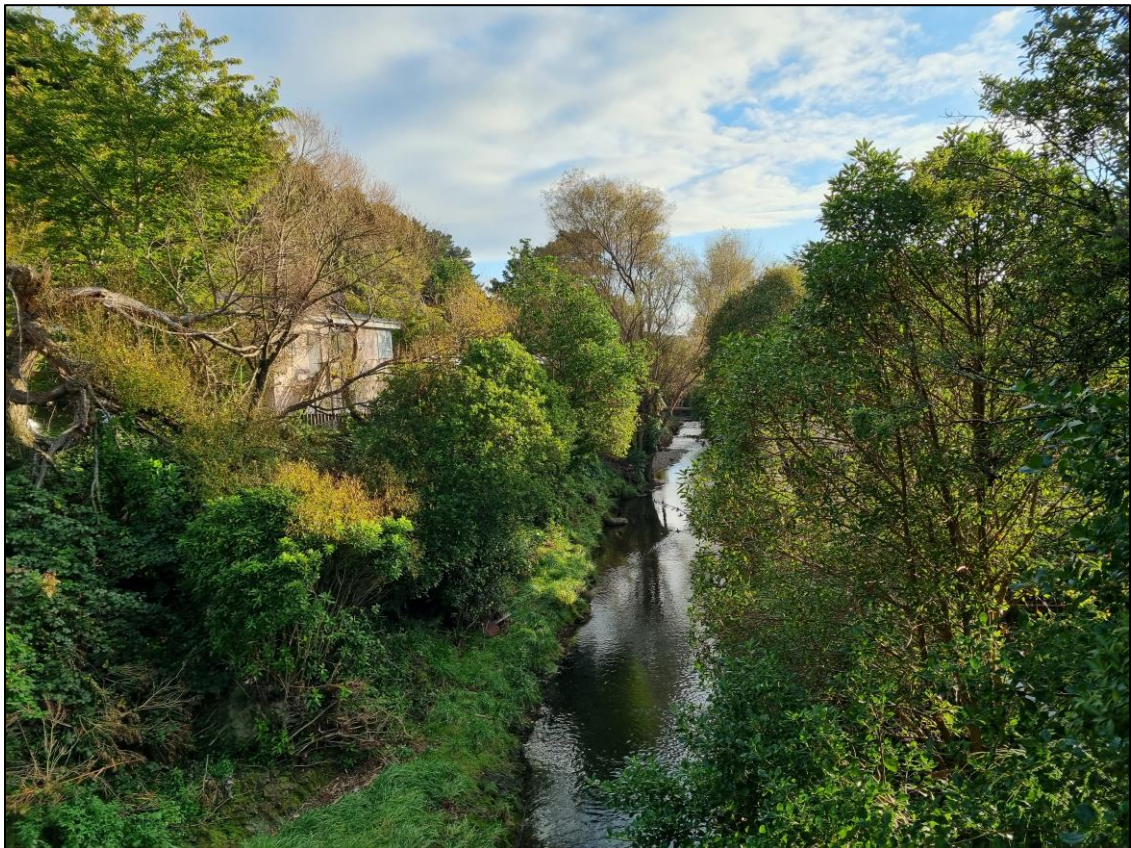


Figure 1: The Porirua Stream - viewed from the adjacent bridge on McLellan Street



Figure 2: View of 1 Nathan Street from the application site



Figure 3: View of 3 Nathan Street from the application site

2.3 A four storey apartment building is proposed for the site, with 24, two-bedroom apartments. Each floor has an identical layout, comprising six units on each floor, with the addition of a lobby on the ground level and access via a stair and ramp within road reserve. There is a communal rubbish storage and collection area and a shared fenced area comprising bike parking for 24 bikes. There is an open service car park for rubbish collection and no on-site private car parking.

3.0 **Residential Design Guide**

The site is located in the Outer Residential Area and requires assessment against the Residential Design Guide.

3.1 The intention of the design guide is *“To facilitate new residential development that is of good design, and responds to its neighbours and local context as well as to the needs of people who live in it.”*

4.0 **Submissions**

Of the 82 submissions received, 61 of the submissions are considered to include relevant urban design matters. Each of these matters have been discussed in more detail in the sections included next to each urban design matter listed below:

- Privacy for neighbours (sections 12.2 – 12.5);
- Lack of on-site facilities and services (sections 9.0 – 9.2);
- Lack of surrounding services to support this level of density (section 5.7);
- Shading of neighbouring properties (sections 5.13 and 6.6);
- Internal amenity and size of apartments (sections 11.1 – 11.7);
- Inconsistency with character (sections 5.0 – 5.14);
- Height and building scale (sections 5.11, 5.13, 10.4 and 12.5);
- Lack of open space (sections 13.0 – 13.4); and
- Impact on the stream (5.9, 8.2, and 13.3).

5.0 **Residential Character**

Objective 1.1 To recognise the unique qualities and sense of place of every urban setting and respond to and enhance these with new development.

Objective 1.2 To minimise visual effects of earthworks on the public realm.

Relevant Guidelines: G1.1, G1.1A, G1.2, G1.6, G1.7, G1.9, G1.10, G1.11, G1.12, G1.13, G1.14

5.1 *Neighbourhood character:* The proposal does not identify and/or relate to the established patterns and precedents that determine the character of the street and local neighbourhood.

5.2 *Consistency v. contrast:* The proposal challenges valued neighbourhood patterns to an unacceptable degree.

5.3 *Façade articulation:* Façade design does not meet expectations and requires revision.

5.4 *Materials, finishes, textures and colours:* The context is characterised by consistency of materials, finishes, textures or colours and the proposal does not satisfactorily integrate typical and/or complementary materials, textures and colours.

5.5 *Adding to existing buildings:* This guideline is not relevant for this application.

5.6 **Comments**

5.7 The site is considered to be an appropriate location for medium density development, due to being located within walking distance from:

- Public transport, with a bus stop located immediately adjacent the western boundary, and directly across the road on Main Road. The Tawa Train Station is located approximately 13 minutes' walk from the site and Linden Train Station approximately 9 minutes' walk from the site;
- Education facilities, including daycares, primary schools, Tawa Intermediate School, and Tawa College (9-11 minute walk);
- Public recreation, such as Grasslees Reserve and Tawa Pool (less than 6 minutes' walk);
- Medical facilities, such as Linden Surgery (10 minute walk) and Tawa Medical Centre and Simon's Unichem Pharmacy (13 minute walk); and
- Retail – 13 minutes' walk from Tawa New World, and 10 minutes from the closest café.

5.8 The application site is located within an area characterised by single and two-storey residential dwellings and open areas of flat and steeply vegetated banks, with the Porirua Stream providing a dominant visual and ecological amenity value. As such, the natural environment and how sites respond to it is an important characteristic along the stream.

- 5.9 The proposed building does not respond positively to the Porirua Stream, with decks that project over the upper stream bank and the resulting loss of existing vegetation.
- 5.10 Dwellings in the area were predominantly constructed in the 1950s and 1960s (including the existing dwelling on the application site) and comprise timber weatherboard cladding, asbestos-cement, and/or brick veneer.
- 5.11 At four storeys in height, the proposed development will be significantly taller than the single storey dwellings on adjacent properties. The proposal will exceed the permitted height limit by one storey for the majority of the building, and two storeys in part along the northern elevation (refer to figure 4).

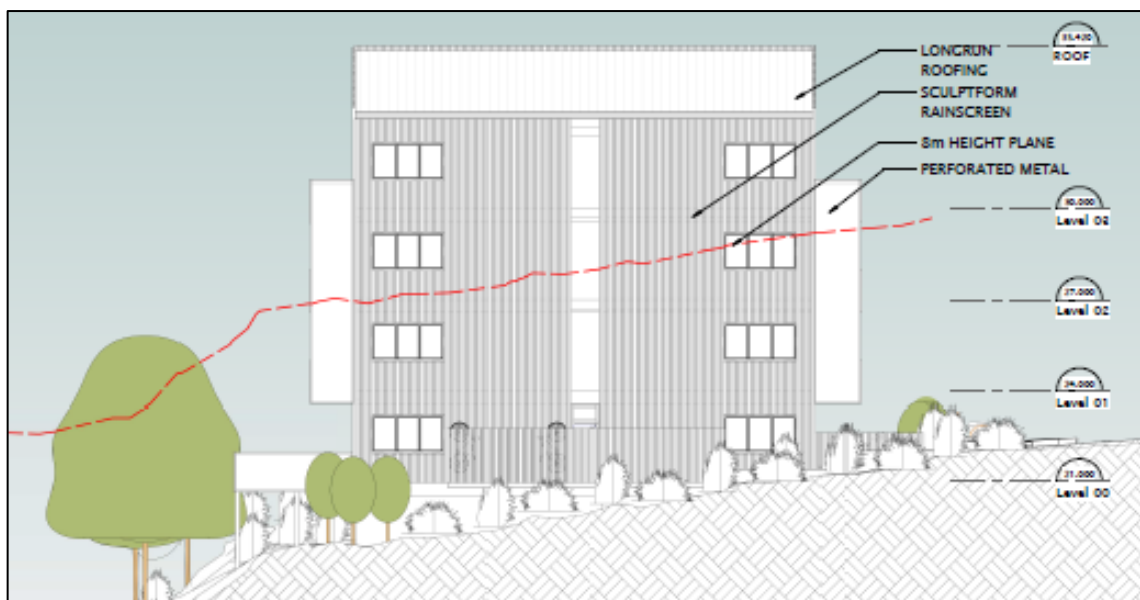


Figure 2: northern elevation showing the extent of proposed building above permitted height limits

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- 5.12 The proposed building will also have a more modern finish, with a decorative screen. This cladding system comprises a wall panel cladding with a cavity space and an aluminium Sculptform Rainscreen attached to protect the building from the elements (refer to figure 5). As such, it will represent a departure from the existing character of the neighbourhood. It is unclear what Sculptform Rainscreen system will be utilised as there are a number of options, including wood finish look, 3D textures (in various profiles) and a panel look (refer to figure 6). The architectural plans appear to show a profiled aluminium screen and timber screens as visual references. Given the potential cladding finish is so variable and the proposed building is expansive with large unbroken areas of cladding, it is recommended that there is a condition of

consent requiring the final cladding system and finish to be clarified and approved by Councils urban design review team prior to Building Consent being issued.

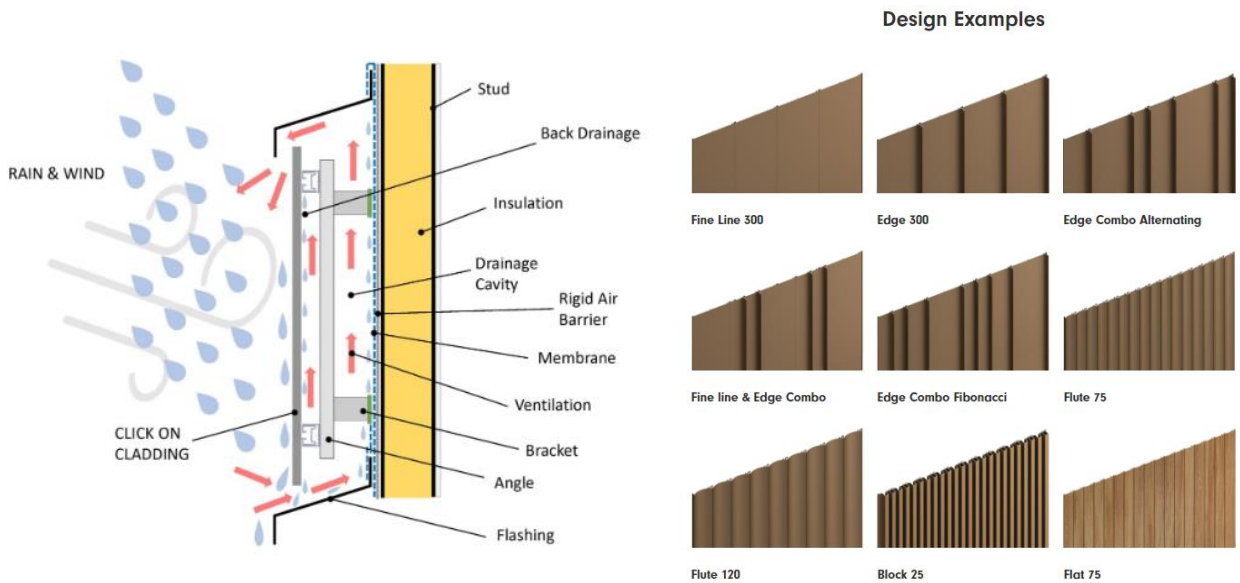


Figure 5: How a Scultform Rainscreen works
<https://sculptform.com/what-is-a-rainscreen/>

Design Examples

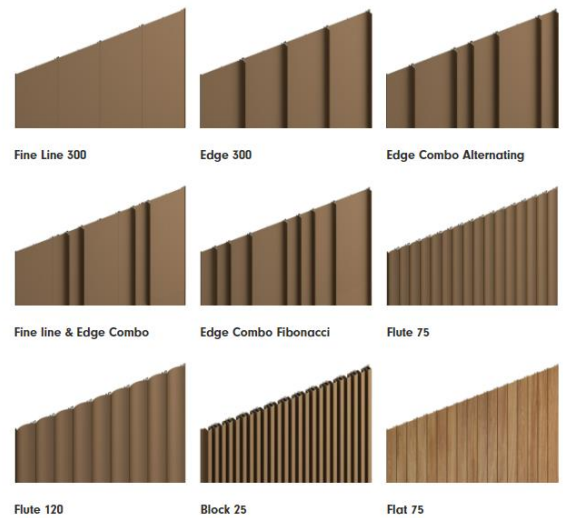


Figure 6: Various Scultform Rainscreen profiles and finishes
<https://sculptform.com/products/click-on-cladding/>

5.13 Additional building height was discussed at early meetings between the applicant and urban design review team for a development on the site. The urban design review team was potentially able to support additional building height on this site if it was concentrated towards the south-west corner of the site where the largest building mass can be located furthest from neighbouring residential properties. The building can then be stepped down towards the northern boundary. The proposal would still need to demonstrate that shading and privacy impacts on neighbouring properties can be addressed. The proposed development has not reduced any of the building height and bulk from what was originally proposed during earlier discussions. As a result, privacy and shading impacts are of an extent that the proposal will be inconsistent with the Residential Design Guide.

5.14 The proposed screen cladding is visually interesting in that it provides different texture and scale when viewed from short range and long-range views. However, given the size of the proposed building, for this to work effectively; particularly at long range distances, there is insufficient visual relief, and the texture of the screen will be lost. This will accentuate the level of building bulk with the lack of cladding variety. This is especially bulky along the southern end of the western elevation and, to an extent, the northern elevation where there are large expanses of blank walls over four storeys.

6.0 **Site Planning**

Objective 2.1 To plan and locate dwellings and open spaces together as a coherent whole, in a way that complements the character of neighbouring development and optimises amenity and liveability both within the development and for neighbours.

Objective 2.2 To make a positive contribution to the safety, amenity and visual character of the street.

Objective 2.3 To site and design buildings to meet the reasonable requirements of occupants and neighbours for visual and acoustic privacy.

Guidelines: G1.7, G1.8, G1.9, G2.1, G2.2, G2.6, G2.13, G3.5, G3.9, G3.10.

6.1 *Site layout:* The proposal does not relate well to the local pattern of building dimensions, frontage widths, front yard setbacks, side yards and spaces between buildings. Siting and mass of buildings does not create good quality indoor or outdoor spaces.

6.2 *Sites with wide frontages:* The site has a wide street frontage and has not provided frequent connections to the street. However, this is due to the development being an apartment building with a primary entrance and lobby rather than separate entries to individual units and is considered acceptable for that reason.

6.3 *Positive open spaces between buildings:*

- The design of elevations on or near common boundaries has been ‘future proofed’ so that amenity will be maintained even if future development on neighbouring sites is maximised.
- Building form has not been located and modelled to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable shading of private outdoor living spaces or windows to main rooms in adjacent dwellings within the development and in residential buildings on adjacent sites.
- Internal circulation within the development is efficient, convenient and understandable.
- CPTED considerations have only partially been taken into account.

6.4 **Comments**

The proposed apartment building maximises buildable space on the site, with the main entry stairs and ramp being located in road reserve. Given the frontage will be largely landscaped,

with vegetation in the road reserve not exceeding 1m in height to maintain line of sight from the intersection, the proposed structures within road reserve will not detract from the area, and the landscaping will be an improvement on the grass and agapanthus that are currently located at the corner.

6.5 Other aspects of the site layout are less positive; these are primarily the lack of outdoor storage for residents (discussed in section 11.7 of this report), the lack of shared open space (discussed in section 13.4 of this report), and the reliance on road reserve to facilitate space to locate scooters.

6.6 The proposal will result in afternoon shading of the outdoor living areas of 1 and 3 Nathan Street, which are located to the east of the application site. There will also be additional afternoon shading on the western elevation of these properties, which contain main living rooms.

- At June 21st – there will be additional shading of the outdoor living area of 1 Nathan Street by 2pm, and additional shading on the western elevation of 1 Nathan Street by 3pm.
- At March 21st – there will be additional shading on the outdoor living areas of 1 and 3 Nathan Street, and additional shading on the western elevations of 1 and 3 Nathan Street by 6pm, extending over the whole sites and on to Nathan Street road reserve.
- At September 21st – there will be additional shading extending over the full width of 1 and 3 Nathan Street, including on to Nathan Street road reserve by 5pm.
- At December 21st – there will be additional shading of the outdoor living areas of 1 and 3 Nathan Street by 5pm, including some western elevations. By 6pm there will be less shading of 1 Nathan Street, with additional shading on 3 and 5 Nathan Street.

As the proposal includes large areas of additional shading that fall on outdoor living areas and main living rooms at all times of the year, the proposed development is considered to result in unreasonable shading of adjacent sites to the east when compared to a building of a permitted height.

6.7 Limited Crime Protection Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles have been incorporated into the design. It is stated that lighting will be provided at the main entrance, however additional lighting should be included in other shared areas, such as service areas. If the commissioner is of a mind to approve the application, a lighting plan could be requested as a condition of consent. In addition to lighting, restricting access to the rear of the site is also important to prevent uninvited visitors from utilising this vegetated area for concealment and

is currently not included in the design for the site. This could involve fencing or landscaping to restrict access which can be included in an updated landscaping plan or requested in a consent condition.

7.0 **Parking and Garages**

Guidelines: G2.8, G2.9, G2.10, G2.11, G2.12, G4.9, G4.10, G4.15.

The development positively responds to the site's accessibility to public transport and walkability to local amenities by minimising private parking.

- The development includes a secure bicycle storage/parking area for 24 bicycles.
- There are no long vehicle accessways.

7.1 **Comments**

The proposal does not include any on-site car parking for residents or visitors. Instead, a service area for rubbish collection and a fenced storage area is provided for bicycles, with one bicycle park for each unit. An area within road reserve has been allocated for scooter parking. However, this scooter space is disconnected from the main entrance and is not secure, so is less likely to be utilised. As additional space for storing alternative transport options, this is poorly resolved and needs improvement.

7.2 The Residential Design Guide seeks to reduce vehicle dominance on the streetscape and within a development. The proposal achieves this outcome, with a single vehicle crossing providing direct access to an open service park. During earlier discussions between the applicant and the urban design review team, the applicant was encouraged to explore options for one or two dedicated, on-site car parking spaces for a car share service for the development, and for charging stations for bikes. This has not been included in the resource consent plans. While a missed opportunity, there is no provision within the design guide to ensure applicants include e-charging or car-share options, with the emphasis being on reducing vehicle dominance on the streetscape and within the development.

8.0 **Landscaping and Earthworks**

Guidelines: G1.3, G1.4, G1.5, G4.11, G4.12, G4.13, G4.16.

- The design minimises the need for large retaining structures and any required earthworks or retaining walls show a positive design response.

- Significant existing trees and vegetation have not been retained where practicable or possible.
- The application includes a landscaping plan that considers amenity, privacy, and practicality.

8.1 **Comments**

The proposal includes a landscape plan that includes planting species and their locations. Given the ecological and cultural values of the Porirua Stream, I have not made comment on the suitability of planting species. However, I recommend a condition of consent for the landscaping plan to be reviewed by a landscape architect for approval.

8.2 Guideline G1.4 of the Residential Design Guide seeks to *retain significant existing trees and vegetation where practicable and where these can be usefully integrated into the residential development, particularly where they are recognised by the local community as having significance beyond the site*. I have concerns over the loss of vegetation within the upper slopes of the western stream bank, as these provide amenity to the stream corridor and to the wider area. The open nature created by the stream is enhanced by the vegetation, including larger trees along the top of the banks. A large portion of the existing screening between neighbouring properties is also provided by these larger trees and means future screening will be difficult as it is reliant on planting at the lower slopes of the stream bank. Any new development on the site should be able to benefit from the stream, including the physical buffer from neighbouring properties, the visual amenity provided by the stream and its planting, and the ecological value the stream provides to the wider area. It would be preferable to locate all buildings and structures clear of the stream banks and allow for more substantial planting along the northern boundary and to west of the stream bank to provide visual softening and screening of the proposed building bulk when viewed from neighbouring properties. Vegetation in these areas should be of a size and species that provides some immediate softening of the development and will not require an extensive number of years to grow to a height where softening can occur.

8.3 The proposal does not include a lighting plan, however the applicant's design guide assessment states that external lighting to the entrance will be included to provide safety at night. Additional lighting will be required for useability and safety in areas such as the bin and bicycle storage areas. Security lighting for areas that are not fenced but can be accessed, such as down the sides of buildings, is recommended. Information on lighting of outdoor areas on the eastern elevation will be useful to ensure that light spill does not create a nuisance for neighbouring properties,

especially given the lack of solid barriers between properties to the east and the subject site. If the commissioner is of a mind to approve the application, a lighting plan can be requested as a condition of consent to allow for any design changes to the proposed building and outdoor areas.

8.4 Hard surface treatments and fencing types have been included in the landscaping plan. These are generally acceptable, with limited areas of hardscaping in the development and fencing only occurring at areas requiring safety from falling. Apart from a 1.2m high perforated panel fence along the front boundary of Units 1.01 and 1.03, the frontage to the site is open, with areas of landscaping and trees.

9.0 **Servicing and Practical Facilities**

Guidelines: G3.13, G4.18, G4.19, G4.20.

- There is screened outdoor storage space in a convenient location to locate rubbish and recycling storage for all dwellings. The Councils' Waste Management Team will comment on whether this space is sufficient in size to accommodate the number of units.
- Private rubbish collection will be required, reducing the impact on the street at the front of the site.
- Satisfactory laundry facilities have not been provided.

9.1 **Comments**

On page 11 of the applicant's design guide assessment states that '*...internal space has been provided within the floor plans for integrated washer/dryers for each unit*'. There is no evidence of space for a washer/dryer in any of the plans and this was not provided when requested as part of the section 92 further information request. There are no communal laundry facilities shown within the proposed building. As such, I cannot confirm that laundry facilities have been provided.

9.2 Rubbish storage and collection has been located in a well screened area that can be directly accessed by a rubbish vehicle. Residents have been provided with direct access to the rubbish area via the central corridor within the building.

10.0 **Building Design**

Objective 3.1 To ensure each building is coherently designed, demonstrates design integrity, and integrates all relevant design criteria in the best possible way.

Objective 3.2 To make a positive contribution to the safety, amenity and visual character of the street.

Objective 3.3 To ensure that the design of new building tops enhances the visual amenity of the area when these are prominent in view.

Objective 3.4 To provide internal living environments that are healthy, comfortable, convenient, functional and attractive for their occupants.

Objective 3.5 To provide reasonable privacy both for the new dwellings and for neighbours.

Guidelines: G3.1, G3.2, G3.3, G3.4, G3.6, G3.7, G3.8, G3.9, G3.17, G3.18, G3.19, G3.20

10.1 *External building detail:* The façades are not well designed and need revision.

10.2 *Frontages/Entrances:*

- The development presents a public face to the street with entrances and windows oriented towards the street.
- The design includes a main entry to an apartment building that provides a sheltered transition space (both outside and immediately inside) and is not dominated by service functions. However, the main entry would benefit from further attention so that it is more visible and legible.
- The design provides entry to apartment(s) that is large enough to provide for services such as mail boxes and space that allows for large items to be delivered.

10.3 *Universal access:* The development appears to have been designed to meet the needs of those with limited mobility.

10.4 **Comments**

The proposed building design utilises rainscreens and timber detailing that will provide variation of texture when viewed from different distances. However, given the height and scale of the building, especially in comparison to existing development in the wider area, the building will be highly prominent from many viewpoints and a lot of the texture detailing will be visually lost, thus increasing the overall visual bulk and dominance of the building. The building would benefit

from further articulation and windows to break up large expanses of featureless facades, including the north and south elevations and the southern end of the west elevation where the stairway and corridor area is located. A variation in cladding systems would also assist with breaking up the expanse of the building and creating visual interest when viewed from further distances.

10.5 The main access to the apartments will be visible from the street and is provided with a sheltered lobby that includes space for letterboxes. However, it is unfortunate that the main entry has a floor level that is lower than the footpath as it loses its visual importance on the streetscape. Raising the roof height of the lobby and consideration of cladding materials and treatment would assist with improving the entrance and street frontage.

10.6 The proposal includes ramped access from the street and an internal lift, which will allow people with limited mobility to use and occupy the development.

11.0 **Internal building detail**

Guidelines: 3.10, G3.11, G3.12.

11.1 *Room function, circulation and storage:*

- Shared internal circulation within the apartment is efficient, convenient, and understandable.
- The size of the main indoor living area is too small for the possible occupancy level of the unit.
- There is inadequate storage for basic household items

11.2 *Sunlight and daylight to living areas:*

- All units are east or west facing, with openness to the west created by the road reserve and openness to the east created by the Porirua Stream. As such, the design and layout of the building should ensure that all units receive good daylight (with the exception of Units 1.01 and 1.03 as discussed in section 13.2).
- Upper levels will benefit from a good/scenic outlook that will further enhance daylight access and amenity.

11.3 *Additional storage for houses without garages:* Dwellings do not have a lockable garage and insufficient secure outdoor storage space is provided for items that are not suitable for storage within a wardrobe, for example tools, sports equipment, etc.

11.4 **Comments**

The apartment building includes 24, two-bedroom units with an identical layout. None of the units have internal storage cupboards and instead rely on bedroom wardrobes. Each unit should have sufficient internal storage for general household items, such as a vacuum cleaner, linen, etc.

11.5 The units would achieve better internal amenity if they shared a single bathroom and used the additional space to provide storage and more space for the living area. As the units are small, the internal spaces need to be carefully laid out to ensure rooms do not feel overcrowded and that there is sufficient space for furniture to accommodate the number of potential occupants.

11.6 All units are oriented with living rooms facing east or west, with additional windows on the northern elevation. As such, all units will receive good levels of daylight. The sun shading diagrams do not provide any clarity on whether internal living rooms will achieve sunlight in mid-winter, especially lower-level units. All bedrooms are designed to have windows on an external wall to achieve natural light and ventilation.

11.7 The proposal does not include any garages and there is no communal or private outdoor storage provided. This should be included in a design revision.

12.0 **Privacy**

Guidelines: G2.10, G3.14, G3.15, G3.16, G4.6, G4.7, G4.8, G4.17.

- The design ensures no loss of privacy between the interiors of units on the site due to their orientation, with no units having short or long range views between living rooms.
- Reasonable privacy for neighbouring sites has not been achieved.

12.1 **Comments**

The layout of units, being side by side, means that there will be no loss of privacy between the internal spaces of each unit. Perforated screens on balconies will provide a degree of screening between outdoor living areas.

- 12.2 The existing building on the site includes two residential dwellings within a two-storey building. As such, the proposed development will represent a significantly higher level of overlooking than the existing situation, with 16 dwellings and their associated outdoor living areas on the eastern elevation, and eight living room windows on the northern elevation.
- 12.3 The cantilevered nature of the lower level decks over the edges of the stream bank means that there will be limited screening from vegetation on the site to limit views from the eastern living rooms and decks over the neighbouring properties at 1 and 3 Nathan Street. While the Design Guide generally focuses on privacy from and to living areas rather than bedrooms, the number of units and the floor to ceiling nature of bedroom windows on the eastern elevation will further compound the perception of being overlooked.
- 12.4 The northern elevation does not include any balconies, however, there is a wall of eight living room windows overlooking 292A Main Road, including its main outdoor living area. The proposed apartment building is set back approximately 6m from the northern boundary, which is consistent with the setback of the existing building on the site. However, the proposed apartment building will have a higher ground floor level than the existing building and two additional floor levels, which will be significantly more visually dominant and increase the perception of overlooking.
- 12.5 By reducing the level of building bulk at the upper levels of the northern portion of the building, it would allow more light access through the site and reduce shading of eastern neighbours, as well as improving the amenity for the northern neighbour at 292A Main Road.

13.0 **Open Space Design**

Objective 4.1 To ensure that the private open space provided is of a high quality that will provide a pleasant outlook, create a pleasant, safe and visually attractive setting for the dwelling and accommodate the reasonable outdoor recreational, service and storage needs of residents.

Objective 4.2 To provide a type and quality of open space that is appropriate to the dwelling type.

Objective 4.3 To provide safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and vehicle access to the dwelling.

Objective 4.4 To ensure the landscape treatment has a positive effect on the streetscape and neighbourhood.

Objective 4.5 To minimise any detrimental effects of vehicle access and parking on the visual quality of the streetscape and neighbourhood environment.

Guidelines: G2.3, G2.4, G4.1, G4.2, G4.4, G4.5

13.1 Every unit has access to an outdoor living area that is directly accessed from the indoor living area and is contained within a single contiguous space. There are two west facing apartments and four east facing apartments on each of the four floor levels. Ground level apartments have access to ground level patios or decks on pole foundations, and upper levels have cantilevered balconies. There is no shared private open space proposed.

13.2 **Comments:**

The two west facing, ground level outdoor living areas are concreted patios, with vegetation and a timber fence between the two patios to provide visual and physical separation (noting all vegetation will be on the side of the fence that services Unit 1.01, with no landscaping in the outdoor living area for Unit 1.03). These outdoor areas will be approximately 1.2m lower than the front boundary with an additional low-level fence along the top of the retaining walls (refer to figure 7). The architectural renders show these balustrades as being aluminium pool fencing, however the landscaping plans has labelled this as perforated steel. Aluminium pool fencing is likely to provide inadequate privacy from the street to both the outdoor living areas and the internal living spaces as pedestrians will be looking down into these spaces, whereas perforated steel panels will provide more privacy but are likely to limit sunlight access, especially to internal living spaces. This will be further exacerbated by upper-level decks positioned above the main access ground level threshold between internal and outdoor living areas. In conclusion, the outdoor living area for Unit 1.01 and 1.03 is considered to not provide sufficient residential amenity for occupants and does not achieve Objective 4.1 of the Residential Design Guide.

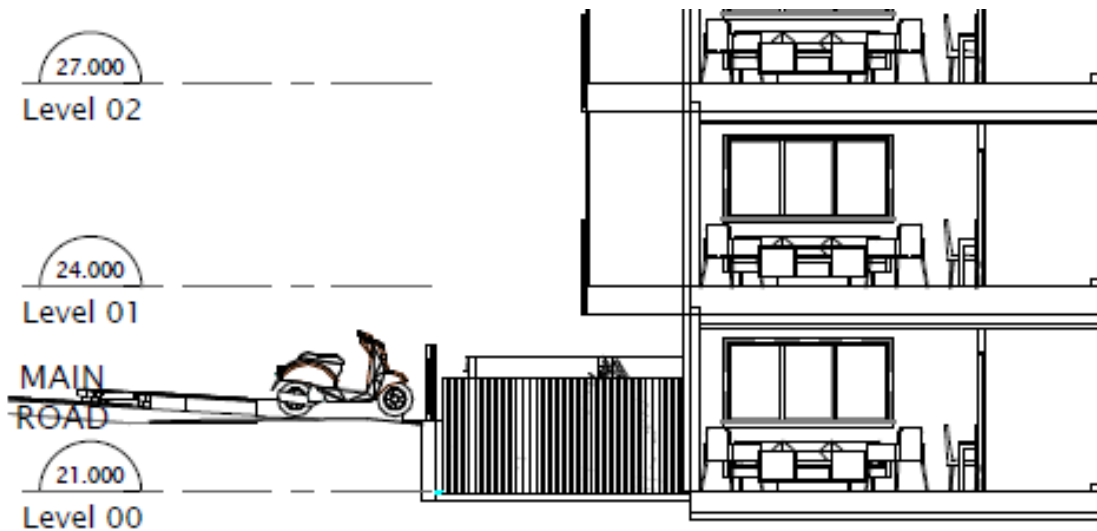


Figure 7: section through Unit 1.01 showing relationship to the street

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- 13.3 Unit 1.01 has the benefit of a north facing window on the northern elevation to provide additional sunlight to the internal living area; however, Unit 1.03 will not only have a triangular outdoor living area that will limit its useability due to the irregular shape, but it will not have access to any other opportunities for additional natural lighting.
- 13.4 The four west facing, ground level decks are partially located at ground level, and partially projecting over the banks of Porirua Stream on piles. These decks are generous and the largest outdoor spaces in the development, with an area of 27m² for each deck. These outdoor living areas are largely elevated and will be provided with a sense of openness, provided by the Porirua Stream. Sunlight will be limited in winter due to the eastern orientation, however, they will receive good morning sunlight for the majority of the year and the openness will ensure a good level of amenity can still be achieved. There will be overlooking from upper-level balconies, which will reduce the degree of privacy, although there is a degree of privacy under the balcony of the unit directly above. I am concerned by the level of decking along the top of the stream bank, and the impact this will have on the stream, noting I am not an ecologist or hydraulic engineer and cannot comment further on these particular matters. However, these decks could be reduced in size, as long as they are still of a useable size (sufficient depth and space to accommodate outdoor furniture for up to four occupants) and quality shared open space is provided.

13.5 All upper-level decks on the western elevation have an area of 6m², and all upper-level decks on the eastern elevation have an area of 5m² and a minimum dimension of approximately 1.5m. Balustrades are in the form of perforated metal screens, with full height screens on the sides of decks on Level 01 and 02. The Residential Design Guide requires all apartments to have useable private open space and recommends a minimum dimension of 2m and area of 10m². At 1.5m, the proposed decks do not provide a reasonable level of depth to locate outdoor furniture for a two-bedroom unit. It is acknowledged that these decks are small and could be supported from an urban design perspective if decks are increased in depth to a minimum dimension of 1.8m and residents are compensated with meaningful and useable shared open space on the site. There is also a park and playground within close walking distance that provides additional recreational amenity.

13.6 The current proposal does not include any communal outdoor living. I do not consider the stream to be shared open space, as while it contributes to the visual qualities of the site, it does not provide space that people can physically use for general residential activities, such as sitting, congregating, having a bbq, etc. As such, the proposed development provides insufficient outdoor space to each of the upper-level units.

14.0 **Summary**

The application site is well located for a new development that would deliver increased residential capacity, due to its close proximity to public amenity, such as transport options, recreation, shops, and medical services. The east-west orientation, with Council reserve to the west and south, and Porirua Stream to the east, means that apartments will generally have a pleasant outlook and sense of openness.

14.1 The proposed development will result in a significantly higher degree of building bulk and density when compared with the existing character of development in the area. Given the site has two sides that face Council reserve and will therefore retain a degree of openness, a taller building could be supported on the site. However, it is still required to demonstrate that privacy and overlooking is mitigated, building bulk and dominance is minimised and/or mitigated, and there is no unreasonable shading of outdoor living areas and windows to main internal rooms. The proposal does not achieve any of these urban design matters, as outlined within this report. As such, the proposal is considered to not meet the following objectives of the Residential Design Guide:

Objective 2.1: To plan and locate dwellings and open spaces together as a coherent whole, in a way that complements the character of neighbouring development and optimises amenity and liveability both within the development and for neighbours; and

Objective 2.3: To site and design buildings to meet the reasonable requirements of occupants and neighbours for visual and acoustic privacy.

Objective 3.5: To provide reasonable privacy both for the new dwellings and for neighbours.

14.2 The proposed units do not have access to any laundry facilities, internal or outdoor storage (apart from bedroom wardrobes), or quality outdoor space given there is no shared open space to provide additional living to compensate smaller private outdoor spaces. As such, the proposal is considered to not meet the following objectives of the Residential Design Guide:

Objective 3.1: To ensure each building is coherently designed, demonstrates design integrity, and integrates all relevant design criteria in the best possible way.

Objective 3.4: To provide internal living environments that are healthy, comfortable, convenient, functional and attractive for their occupants.

Objective 4.1: To ensure that the private open space provided is of a high quality that will provide a pleasant outlook, create a pleasant, safe and visually attractive setting for the dwelling and accommodate the reasonable outdoor recreational, service and storage needs of residents.

Objective 4.2: To provide a type and quality of open space that is appropriate to the dwelling type.

14.3 The proposed development does not include any private on-site car parking for residents; however, each unit has access to a bike park. Vehicle access is limited to a short driveway on Main Road that leads to a service car park. As such, the proposal is able to meet the following objective of the Design Guide that relate to parking and vehicle dominance:

Objective 4.5: To minimise any detrimental effects of vehicle access and parking on the visual quality of the streetscape and neighbourhood environment.

15.0 **Conclusion**

While the proposal has some positive attributes and attempts to maximise opportunities to increase Wellington's housing supply, the level of inconsistency with the Residential Design Guide means that the proposal does not have urban design support.

15.1 If the commissioner is of a mind to grant the application, the following matters should be resolved in a revised set of plans or addressed by consent conditions in order to lift the quality of the development to a standard where better amenity outcomes are achieved.

5.2 **Matters which must be addressed to achieve urban design support:**

15.2.1 Reduce the height of the building to prevent unreasonable shading of 1, 3 and 5 Nathan Street and overlooking of 1 and 3 Nathan Street, and 292A Main Road. Provide shading diagrams to demonstrate that this has been achieved. Reducing the building height (which may include stepping down the building towards the northern boundary), will also lessen overlooking and loss of privacy for neighbouring properties.

15.2.2 Improve residential amenity for Units 1.01 and 1.03. This could be achieved by reducing these units to one bedroom units (which require less outdoor amenity) and increasing living room sizes and orientation. Additional windows can be utilised to achieve more sunlight and daylight to the main living areas. Alternatively, these units can be removed and the space used for other purposes such as storage lockers and bikes.

15.2.3 Increase all upper-level decks to have a minimum internal dimension (excluding cladding and balustrades) of 1.8m.

15.2.4 Reduce bedroom windows on the eastern elevation (i.e. increase sill heights), to reduce the high perception of overlooking.

15.2.5 Add further articulation and windows along the southern portion of the west elevation and provide some variation of cladding. In combination with the reduced building height, this will break up the building bulk and reduce the buildings visual dominance on the streetscape and neighbouring properties.

15.2.6 Include additional storage for each unit for items such as tools, sports equipment and other items that are not easily stored in a wardrobe. Given the number of units

proposed, ideally this would be in the form of ground level, lockable lockers or similar.

- 15.2.7 Include space for laundry facilities (both washing and drying). This could either be a laundry space within each individual unit, or a communal laundry for the development.
- 15.2.8 Proposed outdoor living areas are insufficient in size and amenity without quality shared outdoor space that is safe, sunny, and accessible, and of a size that can accommodate a number of residents at once. Provide quality, shared open space to allow for additional outdoor amenity for residents with undersized outdoor living areas. The shared open space should be well considered and integrated with the development, easy to access, safe (for example, permeable fencing may be appropriate if there is open access to the stream to provide safety for children), received good sunlight, and of a reasonable size that it is useable for residents.
- 15.2.9 Provide an updated landscaping plan, which includes:
- what existing vegetation is to be removed;
 - planting species, locations, and sizes. Larger plants may be more appropriate in locations that provide screening and visual softening of building bulk to ensure they have some immediate effect. Planting species, heights and locations are to be reviewed and approved by the Councils landscape architect advisor;
 - hard surface treatments;
 - location of all fences and gates, including materials, types and heights
 - location, height and treatment of all retaining walls;
 - location of any external furniture and/or structures (such as storage areas);
 - external lighting plan for the development (this could form a condition of consent to be required at a later stage, prior to construction); and
 - consideration of how the site can be made secure from entrapment areas and access to the rear of the site (this could form a condition of consent to be required at a later stage, prior to construction).

15.2.10 Ensure service plant is well screened from any publicly visible space and does not obstruct or impact balcony areas.

15.2.11 Set back ground level decks (and buildings if necessary) to preserve the Porirua Stream banks and retain as much existing vegetation on the stream banks as possible. Setting these decks back will also allow space for additional planting for vegetation that can grow to a height that can provide additional screening and softening.

5.3 **Matters that are not required for urban design support but would improve residential and streetscape amenity and are recommended:**

15.3.1 Avoid reliance on road reserve for additional transport parking (scooters). Include secure on-site parking spaces.

15.3.2 Improve the visibility of the front entry by increasing the height of the lobby and considering a change of materials to visually enhance this space.

15.3.3 Relocate bike parking (and potentially rubbish storage) to open up the northern area of the site for quality shared open space. Bike storage should be sheltered with a roof, have secure entry and have storage space and capability for charging e-bikes. These areas could be located in place of Units 1.01 and 1.03 which do not achieve good amenity.

15.3.4 Confirm the cladding types and finishes for urban design review team approval prior to building consent being issued. If the building is reduced in scale and/or can be further visually broken up with additional windows and variation of cladding, this condition may not be required.

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