

# **Wesley Precinct: As a Character Area or Medium Intensity Residential Zone**

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**Commissioner Stream 2 Oral  
Submission for Wellington  
Proposed District Plan**

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Precinct Residents, March 30, 2023

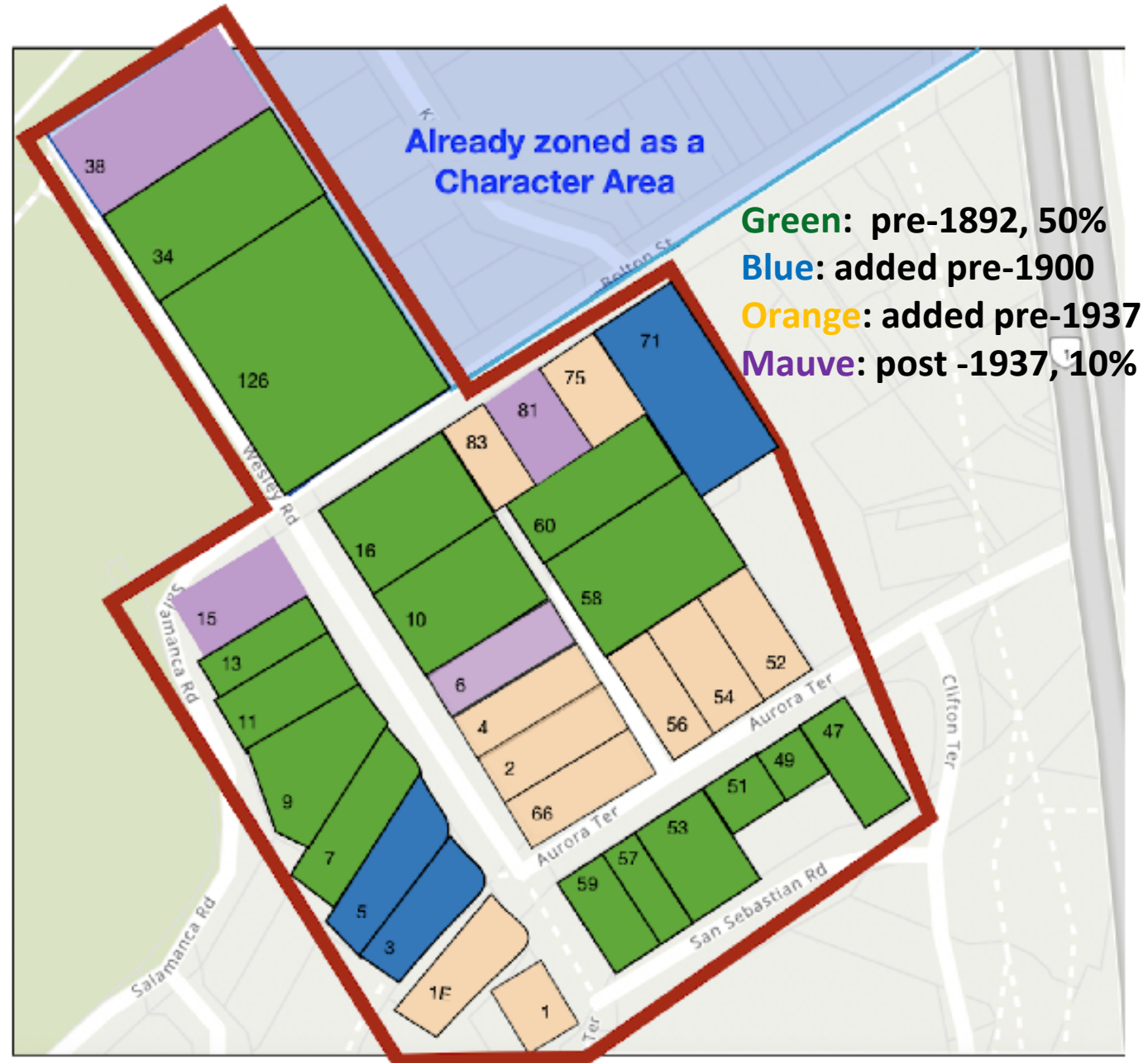
All photographs from Wesley Precinct

## PERIODS OF CONSTRUCTION OF HOMES IN WESLEY PRECINCT

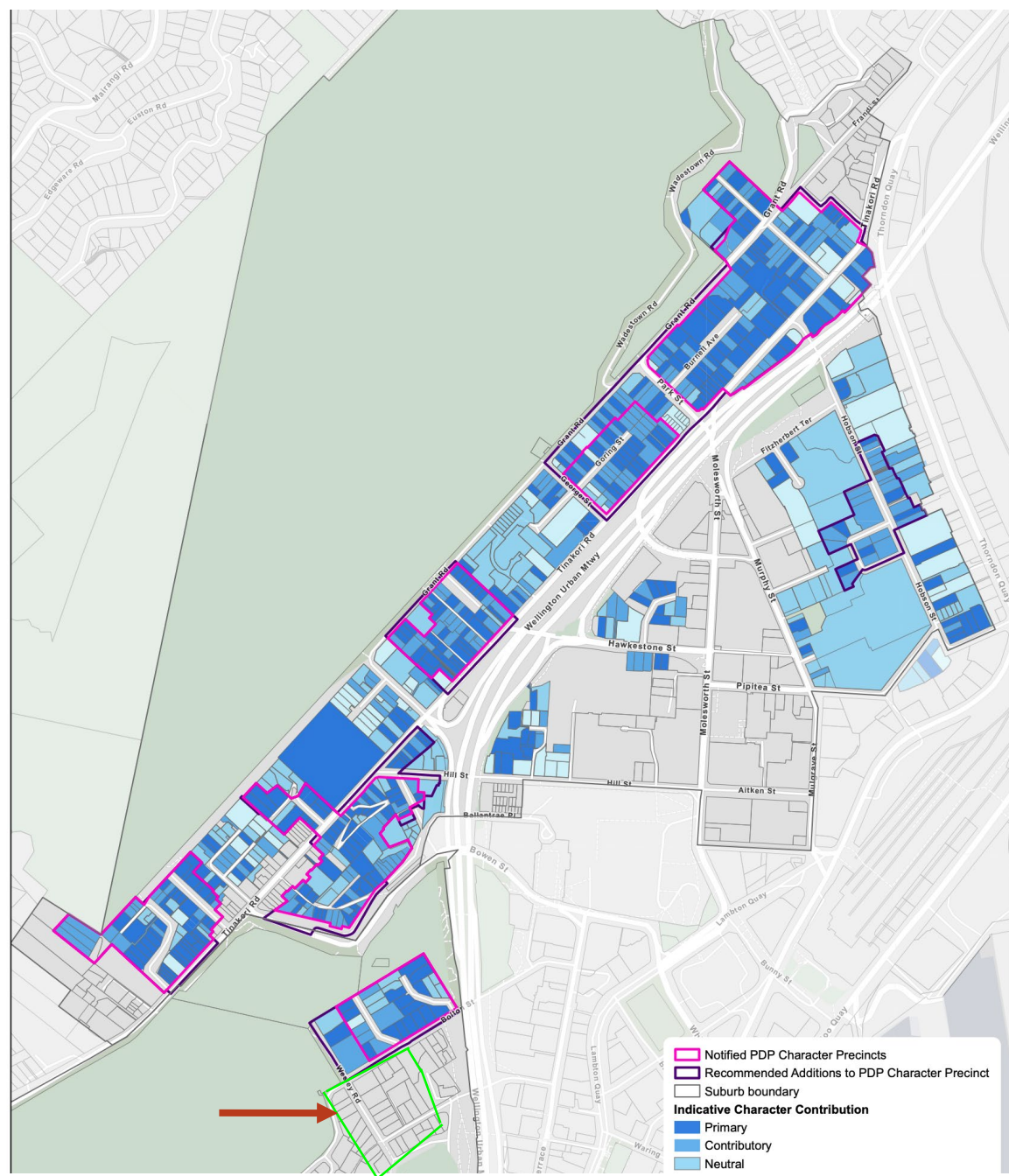
# Wesley Precinct: Rationale for Character Area or Medium Residential Zone designation

### Summary

- This compact area of 33 well-established houses meets the criteria for Character Area Designation.
- It should be added to the adjacent very similar Character Area on the north side of Bolton Street.
- This presentation summarises (i) the rationale for a Character Area or MRZ and (ii) why the PDP zoning proposed for this area will not contribute to the Council's aims for the District Plan.



# Wesley Precinct in relation to Thorndon Character Areas





## Rationale for Character Area or MRZ designation

- The 2019 Boffa Miskell Review concluded by recommending that Wesley Precinct be investigated for Character status (see Appendix).
- Sixty percent of the houses were built before 1900, 90% before 1937. This is a very old, established neighbourhood.
- The area is consistent with old residential homes of 1 to 2 storeys with no commercial activity.



## Rationale for Character Area or MRZ designation

- The precinct is dominated by very steep, narrow, one-way streets with limited sidewalks, and is unsuitable for high rise.
- High-rise construction under these conditions would be difficult, expensive and very disruptive.



# Examples of Steep Streets

**Aurora Terrace**



**Bolton Street**



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# Rationale for Character Area or MRZ designation

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- Randomly located high density blocks would severely disrupt the neighborhood and lives of current home owners and renters.
- By blocking essential warmth from sunlight, random high density blocks would deteriorate the condition of surrounding old wooden houses and reduce their value.
- Therefore these steep hills and gullies require assessment of sites individually to determine their suitability for high rise building.
- The current neighbourhood functions well. The houses have been long resilient to Wellington's earthquakes and severe weather.



## Rationale for Character Area or MRZ designation

- An established wooded, leafy precinct with old trees providing shade among other climate change benefits, and with spongeable surfaces providing water retention on steep slopes during heavy rain.
- Current low-rise housing allows the upper Botanic Gardens to be connected visually to the city's harbour (cf WCC's 1970's important view ruling). High density blocks would break this connection.



## Rationale for Character Area or MRZ designation

- Pre-1900 houses (60%) are important heritage, built with a now-lost craftsmanship which used ancient timbers from now-vanished Kapiti lowland forest. (“Nga Uruora: the Groves of Life” by Geoff Park)
- Many homes housed residents of significance in national and Wellington history.



## Proposed zoning will not contribute to the Council's aims for the District Plan

- Expensive location and property values here will not lead to construction of much-needed housing for moderate- and low-income earners.
- Hence high rise apartments here will benefit primarily developers and property speculators.
- High density in much of the inner suburbs is not required to supply apartments before 2051 (WCC's HBA 2022), hence much HRZ re-zoning is unnecessary as well as dismissive of needs of current residents.
- More than sufficient flat land for needed new building exists in and near the CBD on transport corridors; a view supported by developers.



## Proposed zoning will not contribute to the Council's aims for the District Plan

- Very steep roads mean the area is not walkable from transport for most people. Cars are essential. Parking is very limited.
- Demolition clogs landfills releasing carbon from timber while adding to high carbon emissions of new building materials.
- Wesley Precinct has many large trees whose loss would reduce the carbon sink capacity of the area. This does not align with climate change intents of the proposed DP.
- Some developers do not recommend high rise building on Wellington hills – the Wesley Precinct is on steep valleys.



# Appendix

Boffa Miskell



## Pre-1930 Character Area Review

Prepared for Wellington City Council  
23 January 2019



### Screenshot of Page 28

#### 4.2 Contiguous Character Areas

In addition to the individual buildings and groups of buildings of potential heritage value identified above, an examination of areas adjacent/in close proximity to the six character areas was undertaken to determine whether they could warrant further consideration/investigation as potential contributors to the character of the existing areas.

Based on an analysis of the building age data supplied by WCC eight discrete, contiguous areas containing a concentration of pre-1930 properties were identified, the location of which is set out below (also refer Appendix 5: Figures 4-5):

##### Thorndon

- An area to the west of Kinross Street and Clifton Terrace, broadly bounded by San Sebastian Road, Wesley Road and Bolton Street