

Wellington City District Plan – Omnibus Plan Change

Definitions – Verandah Level

Scope of Proposed Change

To add a definition of ‘*verandah level*’ to assist with the application of CCZ-R23.1.a.v (Additions and alterations to buildings) and the equivalent rules in the Metropolitan Centre Zone (MCZ-R21.1.a.v), Local Centre Zone (LCZ-R19.1.a.v) and Neighbourhood Centre Zone (NCZ-19.1.a.v).

Background

CCZ-R23.1.a, and the equivalent rules listed above, permit a range of additions and alterations to buildings in the centres zones where:

- a. The alterations or additions to a building or structure:
 - i. Do not alter its external appearance; or
 - ii. Involve the placement of solar panels on rooftops; or
 - iii. Involve maintenance, repair or painting; or
 - iv. Involve re-cladding with like for like materials and colours; or
 - v. Relate to a building frontage that is:
 - **below verandah level**, including entranceways and glazing; and
 - compliant with CCZ-S8; or
 - vi. Are not visible from a public space; and

The purpose of CCZ-R23.1.a.v is to prevent unnecessary consenting demands for shop fitouts as tenancies change, recognising that economic conditions and other factors influence tenancy duration and that it is a better outcome for the City centre and other centres to have occupied commercial tenancies than to remain vacant due to resource consent delays. The exception to this would be where the building is also a scheduled heritage building.

CCZ-R23.1.a aligns with the 2000 District Plan permitted activity rule 13.1.2.1 (Central Area). Likewise, MCZ-R21.1.a.v, LCZ-R19.1.a.v and NCZ-19.1.a.v carry down 2000 District Plan rule 7.1.4.1 (Centres). Rules 13.1.2.1 and 7.1.4.1 have long been included in the District Plan and predate Plan Changes 48 (Central Area Review (2008) and 73 (Suburban Centres Review (2014)). Additional context is provided at section 8.7.1 of the [section 32 report](#) for Plan Change 48.

The above section 32 report identifies that a definition of ‘*verandah level*’ was necessary as the lack of definition meant the verandah level of a building required identification on a case-by-case basis. Hence, through Plan Change 48, the following definition was included in the 2000 District Plan:

“Verandah level means the height of a formed verandah, or where there is no formed verandah the height of the ground floor storey (up to a maximum height of 4.2 m)”.

It is unclear why the definition was not carried through to the 2024 District Plan definitions; however, it does not appear that this was intentionally omitted. Planners in the Council’s Resource Consents Team have identified that the lack of definition is now leading to queries and debates about what ‘*below verandah level*’ means, and difficulties with Plan interpretation. To ensure the above provisions are applied effectively, they have requested that a definition is added.

This issue is limited in scale, given for the most part ‘*verandah level*’ can be clearly identified due to the presence of a verandah. The 4.2m height equates to the top of the ground floor of most centres’ buildings (at the exterior of the elevation), noting that a 4 metre internal height is required.

Issue

That there is no definition of verandah level, making the District Plan provisions referencing verandah level difficult to interpret.

Assessment of Options*Relevant Options*

For the purposes of this evaluation, the following options have been considered:

- Option 1: Retain the status quo, with no definition of verandah level.
- Option 2: Add a new definition of 'verandah level' at Part One – Definitions.

*Cost/Benefit Assessment*Option 1 - Status quo

There are no discernible social or cultural costs or benefits associated with this option, nor are there any specific environmental or economic benefits.

As the lack of a clear definition of 'verandah level' creates uncertainty as to how CCZ-R23.1.a.v and the equivalent MCZ, LCZ and NCZ rules should be applied, engagement with Council to clarify the rule and confirm the verandah level of individual buildings may result in some economic cost to developers and their agents.

Any such costs would be limited where agreement is reached; however, could be more significant if the rule cannot be easily applied. In some instances this might lead to resource consent being sought where the District Plan intended that the works would be permitted, thereby leading to additional development costs.

Option 2 – Add a new definition of 'verandah level'

The addition of a new definition will assist with interpretation of the CCZ, MCZ, LCZ and NCZ rules referencing 'verandah level' but will not change the intent of the rules or how these are intended to be applied. As such, there are no social, cultural or environmental costs or benefits associated with the change.

There are no economic costs associated with addition of the definition, which will enable developers, architects and planners to clearly identify whether or not works require resource consent or not. The ability to clearly interpret and apply the rule will reduce time and unnecessary contact with the Council, with a resultant economic benefit to developers.

Effectiveness and efficiency

While CCZ-R23.1.a.v and the equivalent provisions in other centres would generally continue to be effective without the new definition, its addition would improve interpretation and implementation of the Plan and resolve the issue. Hence the addition of the definition is considered to be the most effective way of ensuring that the rules are applying as intended.

Risk of acting/not acting

There are not significant risks associated with either option identified above.

Recommended Option

Following the assessment above, Option 2 is the preferred option as this will address the issue and improve ease of application of the rule moving forward.

Consultation

The change was requested by the Council's Resource Consent Team, who have advised that they are supportive of the recommended option.

Given the minor nature of the change, no additional consultation has been undertaken.

Recommended Change

Add a new definition of verandah level at Part One – Introduction and General Provisions – Interpretation – Definitions as follows:

Verandah level means the height of a formed verandah, or where there is no formed verandah the height of the ground floor storey (up to a maximum height of 4.2 m).

Consequential Amendments

No consequential amendments are required.