

17th February 2006

**Re: Proposed District Plan Change 39: Controls on Residential development in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook**

This submission is from the Wellington Architectural Centre, a group which represents both professional and non-professionals interested in architecture and design, and in the promotion of good design in Wellington.

**Opposition to the Proposed Plan Change**

The Architectural Centre does not support the proposed plan change in its entirety.

**Introduction**

The Architectural Centre endorses the council's aim to ensure that the residential character of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook is maintained and enhanced, and we acknowledge the need to ensure that new buildings and developments recognise and enhance the character of the suburbs. The Centre also recognises that multi-unit development has the greatest potential to alter the single unit character of the area, and that there is an increasing demand for higher density dwellings, and hence the real need for a reconsideration of the existing building controls and guidelines.

**The Four Options**

The Section 32 Report outlines four options. We do not support options 1 or 2 which suggest the status quo remains, or that a deferred change follows a city-wide analysis. We also consider that the recommended option 3 is deficient because the proposal reflects a diluted understanding of the character of existing buildings the area, particularly in relation to supporting the "tightly packed" nature of much of the area.

Therefore the Centre strongly supports the ambitions of option 4 to truly and assertively reflect the characteristic built form in Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook as recognised in the Section 32 Report (i.e. houses "oriented to face the street and located towards the front of the site. Side yards are often very small ... Heights are generally one or two storeys").

**Specific Concerns**

The Centre is specifically concerned that the hesitancy of option 3 will compromise the character of the area, and suspect that this tentativeness (while moderating to some extent the current trend of multi-unit development), will cause the richness of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook to become mediocre suburbia.

**Recommendation**

Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook are not uniformly consistent regarding front yard setbacks, and while some properties have "well landscaped front gardens" (B3), "many street corners are defined by buildings built to the street boundary" (Southern Inner Residential Areas Design Guide for Multi-Unit Housing). In recognition that the average setback is an average and not always a reality, we strongly recommend that the front yard set back be: 3 metres increased or reduced to reflect the setbacks of adjacent building. The requirement that the required front yard setback is mobile would assist with maintaining the current character of the area's streetscape, by maintaining the current pattern of setbacks.

**Conclusion**

There are several aspects to the proposal which the Centre does support. We support the proposed implementation of a rule to control demolition of pre-1930 buildings, and we support the proposed maximum height of 9 metres.



the architectural centre inc.  
PO Box 24178 Wellington

The council's research has carefully recognised and documented the character of the area, and we strongly encourage the council to implement a plan change which will more fully reflect the character of the area, to really ensure that the variety and particular nature of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook can productively negotiate the inevitable increase in multi-unit and other development in the area.

Yours sincerely

Christine McCarthy  
President  
The Architectural Centre