

14 December 2007

Re: Adelaide Road - Planning for the Future

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.

In general we support the key issues the council has identified to inform the future planning of the Adelaide Road area. Below are elaborations on these and additional issues we believe need to be considered.

(1) The need for different strategies in different part of the Adelaide Rd area

Future development will need to recognise the diversity of form, intensity, and character in the area, which will mean that different strategies will be required in different areas. For example Wallace and Tasman St are very different in scale, character and distinction than the majority of Adelaide Road area (as indicated on the map). This area of Adelaide Rd is very poor in terms of urban design (particularly in terms of inactive street fronts, and the need for mixed use)).

(2) Poor Infill Housing development needs addressing as an issue of urban fabric not individual buildings

Hanson, King and Drummond Streets are not providing quality housing and the relationship between open space and density, and the provision of amenity (e.g. sunlight and air), need to be addressed through comprehensive development plans/master planning, rather than what the market is currently delivering - which is substandard infill housing. High quality public open space is a requirement with intensive residential development

(3) Prioritise safe pedestrian, cycle and public transport

Transport strategies need to prioritise pedestrian, cycle and public transport. In particular pedestrian and cycle safety needs to be prioritised in terms of both collision prevention (esp the need for safe connections at the Basin Reserve) and risks to health due to air quality. As in other parts of the city, private vehicle transportation needs reduction. We support an emphasis on public transport and the rerouting of the majority of private transport via other roads. All transportation in this area needs to be considered in relation to the Ngauranga to Airport Transport Study, and proposals for busways, light rail and public transport hubs in the area.

(4) Walkability and street edge design need assertive and appropriate attention

Street edge design is as important as the provision of safe footpaths. This is especially true if residential development is encouraged along this route. Residents must feel safe and comfortable walking into town rather than jumping into their cars. The increasing age of the population also supports the need for safe and comfortable pedestrian routes. The current stretch of Adelaide road is an appalling pedestrian environment. It lacks shelter/shade, edge activity (other than carparks), and aesthetic pleasure. The length and straightness of the route means that active edges, diversity and mixed use are necessities in order to make the route "walkable." Future developments must take these aspects of benevolent design into account. Existing properties should be encouraged to improve their edges. Rates incentives may be one way to do this.



the architectural centre inc.
PO Box 24178 Wellington

(5) Create Civically Responsible "big box" Retail

It would be naive to think that the current retail development along Adelaide Rd will magically turn into boutique Thorndon. The council's study of this area needs to provide civically responsible ways for larger retail outlets to productively contribute to the cityscape. Adelaide Rd is a real opportunity to create civically responsible big box retail. This project must develop a model (or models) for big box retail which exhibits good urban values, providing mixed use environments of appropriate scale and with active edges on the street edge supporting pedestrian and cycle transport - rather than seas of banal carparks. Carparks, if needed, must be placed behind buildings on the street. A mix of big box development with, or incorporating, smaller retail premises on the street edge might discourage the drift of customers seeking this type of retail toward regional suburban centres, and discourage out of place developments such as the Rongotai centre, and the proposed centre in Kilbirnie. Apartments and offices/workshops etc. could be incorporated in the upper levels of these buildings. Regardless all development must be better than what it replaces, in terms of civic responsibility and generosity to the public environment.

(4) Contemporary High Quality Design is Needed

We do not support any attempts for the redevelopment of Adelaide Rd south of the Riddiford St shopping area to have faux Victoriana building. This area needs good quality contemporary architecture and urban design.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this area of the city. Our members are frequent users of the area, and would be interested in being part of the study group. If you have any questions about any of the points raised please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Christine McCarthy
President
The Architectural Centre