

Normandale Residents Association

*c/o 301 Normandale Road
Lower Hutt*

SUBMISSION

TO HUTT CITY COUNCIL On the discussion paper Providing for greater housing choice

The Normandale Residents Association wish to make the following submission on the proposals in this discussion paper.

We also wish to speak in support of our submission at the appropriate Council meeting

We note with concern that the supposed delivery of explanatory leaflets to “every household” did not take place, and submit that the Council review the mechanism used for delivery of such information.

Overall comment

We are pleased to note that the Council is reviewing the provision of housing within the City to meet the changing requirements of society, and their commitment in the LTCCP to a sustainable walkable city.

We support the concepts covered by these provisions and in particular, the move to smaller houses, and the promotion of high density housing around transport and community centres. We are also pleased to note the commitment to maintaining the character of areas, but are disappointed that this has not been more rigorously established by the provision of restrictions in the appearance of buildings to ensure development is in sympathy with the environment.

We would submit that in order to achieve this last mentioned objective, development criteria should also include restrictions on the removal or trimming of mature trees.

We submit that the opportunity should also be taken to introduce requirements for dwelling orientation to ensure maximum passive solar gain, and a requirement for solar water heating to be mandatory unless the insolation factor of the site can be demonstrated to be inadequate.

We also note that the current provisions for Hill residential properties, proposed to be retained, are insufficient to prevent the development of grossly oversized houses. We therefore submit that the site coverage should be reduced or a maximum floor area be included.

Our detailed comments on the individual sections follow.

1. High density residential areas

We support the concept of providing high density housing, particularly terraced and low level apartments, and support the extension of the high density residential area to

an area within five minutes walk of local community centres, the CBD and transport hubs.

1a. Minimum net site area

We support the retention of the existing activity areas and the minimum site areas

1b, Site coverage

We support the view that stand alone ie detached, housing of 140m² area is unlikely to be the best option for future housing needs, and therefore support the retention of the existing site coverage for general residential activity areas so as to provide the opportunity for terraced housing and apartments.

For the NPA, the Hill residential and Landscape protection areas are of primary concern and we note that the proposed site coverage for both these categories is more than twice the “generally desirable” house size noted in section 1b, and inconsistent with the provisions of other special category activity areas.

Activity area	Min plot size	Percent coverage	Max house area on minimum site
Historic	370m ²	40%	148m ²
Special	700m ²	30%	210m ²
Hill	1000m ²	30%	300m ²
Landscape	2000m ²	15%	300m ²

We therefore submit that the maximum percent coverage for Hill residential and Landscape protection activity areas should be reduced to 15% and 7.5% respectively.

1c. Activity boundary areas

We support the retention of the existing categories of activity area, with the extension of the higher density provisions to an area within five minutes walk of local centres.

2. Comprehensive residential development (CRD).

We support the reduction of dwellings on a site constituting a CRD to three for high density residential areas and the deletion of this provision for the Hill residential activity area.

We strongly support the introduction of a design guide to cover CRDs, and submit that this concept should be extended to cover non CRD development in all areas.

2a. Courtyard / outdoor living areas

We support the introduction of an outdoor living area requirement of the dimensions given.

3. Yards decks and accessory buildings

We generally support the recommended changes, but submit that resource consent should be retained for the erection of accessory buildings.

4. Family flat / minor residential unit

We support the existing constraints on the construction of any residential building on a site, and their retention.

5. Maximum height

We consider that a height restriction to preclude three storey dwellings is appropriate to all activity areas.

6. Shape factor

We support the retention of the existing shape factor, but submit that a design guide specifying positioning and orientation on a site should also be introduced.

7. Building length

We do not support the removal of the building length rule from the District plan. We consider that as suggested, the redefinition of decking to distinguish them from buildings will prevent excessive applications for consent, but that this does not negate the desirability of controlling the length and therefore the aspect ratio of building footprints.

8. Recession planes

Whilst we accept that a standard recession plane for all boundaries would be simpler to understand and administer, we do not accept that it should be standardised on the least restrictive of the existing values. We cannot accept that the number of applications for resource consents to infringe the existing values should be used to justify relaxing them. The existing values are based on objective criteria, and should not be varied to accommodate the subjective views of developers. In our view a more rigorous enforcement of the existing values would also achieve a decrease in applications for infringement if this is a concern.

We submit that if a standard recession plane is desirable this should be set at 2.5m + 40° for all boundaries.

9. Permeable surfaces

We strongly support the introduction of a minimum requirement for permeable surfaces. We note however that in hill suburbs an impermeably surfaced drive is necessary not only to provide security of traction but to prevent erosion blocking the reticulated surface water drainage system. Given that on steep hill sites the length of the drive is often out of proportion to the distance of the dwelling from the road, consideration should be given to varying this value in the case of new drives, as opposed to new dwellings.

10. Slope stability

We support the introduction of greater controls on hill side development. However we note that the natural angle of repose is dependent on the composition of the soils and underlying geological structure. We consider that within the Western Hills, a more appropriate angle at which earth works becomes a restricted discretionary activity would be 30°.

11. Home occupations

We generally support the proposed changes, but submit that sale or storage of motor vehicles as a business should be included in the list of excluded “home occupations”.

12. Childcare facilities

We support the retention of the existing provisions.

P. Matcham
President