

NEWTOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION POSITION

The Newtown Residents' Association meeting on 21st June 2021 discussed the Wellington City Council Spatial Plan and agreed on the following position statement:

The Newtown Residents' Association would like to be able to support the WCC Spatial Plan prioritising Newtown to be one of the first Wellington suburbs where densification is developed. We agree with Generation Zero and Renters United that many more warm, dry, affordable homes are needed in Wellington. We would like more warm, dry, affordable homes here in Newtown, and we would love to be the suburb where the next generation could afford a home. Our Association has spent over 30 years lobbying Council in favour of intensification within our Newtown suburban centre* where 6 storey apartments can easily fit on underdeveloped commercial and industrial sites and in behind our heritage shopfronts. Intensification here puts our new residents right on the transport corridor, with sheltered verandahs, and close walking distance to all our suburb's amenities.

Red Design's** test scheme that demonstrated 6 storey infill housing in this part of our suburb proved that new buildings on only 45% of this part of Newtown can provide 2,000 new homes***. The Association would like the Spatial Plan mapping to enable intense development in the Newtown suburban centre, development that works with the iconic historic buildings and shopfronts. If Newtown's Spatial Plan intensification mapping was all focused on the suburban centre and the Mansfield St escarpment area used by Red Design, then only 16% of this area would need to be built to 6 storeys for our community to meet the expected NPS UD required growth. Our Association would welcome more homes than required being built in this part of our community.

Spatial Plan mapping that meant Newtown locals would not need to dispute what might happen next door to their homes or flats is a significant qualifying matter that is the bonus of this approach. If the residential areas outside of the protected heritage and character areas were zoned for in scale up to 3 storey infill (not 6 storey high rise), then Newtown Residents' Association would then be able to support the Spatial Plan wholeheartedly. Mana whenua, the Residents' Association, Generation Zero, Renters United, We Are Newtown, other local groups and members of our community would all be able to collaborate with Council, and focus instead on the District Plan Rules that enable Newtown to take the lead, embrace the Spatial Plan, and to get on with providing additional housing****.

APPROVED MOTION June 2021: If Newtown's Spatial Plan mapping for 6 storeys was all focused within the suburban centre and Mansfield St escarpment area, as in the concept plan developed by Red Design, and if the residential areas not included in heritage character protection were zoned for in-scale up to 3 storey infill housing, rather than enabling 6 or more storeys, then the Newtown Residents' Association would wholeheartedly support the WCC Spatial Plan and would support the prioritising of Newtown to be one of the first suburbs where densification is developed. The Association members would also support in-depth community consultation, where a Newtown place-based zoning exercise identifies other areas of our suburb where our community would approve of additional future intensification.

*Here 4 storey buildings can already be built without side yards and daylight set-backs between in-zone neighbours.

**Local Architecture, Urban Design and Social Policy practice embedded within the Newtown Community for the last 40 years. Red Design are experts in in-depth community consultation and the driving force behind the Newtown Festival. [*Newtown's intergenerational multi-cultural celebration of place, performance, creativity, culture and community that every year involves nearly 1000 performers and 450 stalls (run by approx. 1200 stallholders) all convened by 250 volunteers and 180 paid crew and staged in the heart of central Newtown*].

***Three times the number of new homes projected to be required in Newtown over the next 30 years. The proposed new apartments in the test design included courtyards and open space, 82% of the apartments had sun and views on at least 2 sides, 63% were 100 sqm. No heritage buildings were harmed in the making of this scheme.

****Red Design know of at least 12 owners currently keen to develop their central Newtown properties, 6 of which already have plans underway. But overly restrictive interpretation of the design guide provisions and heritage rules by WCC officers are currently holding them back from intensifying.