

APPENDIX 29D.1

Neighbourhood Centre Design Assessment Criteria

Purpose of Appendix 29D.1

In the residential areas of identified Structure Plans (refer Part 54 or Map 105 of the Plan) buildings and development in a "Neighbourhood Centre" (refer Part 50 Definitions) is a restricted discretionary activity. Such applications are assessed in terms of a series of matters, to which the Council will restrict the exercise of its discretion.

One of the matters which the Council will have regard to is:

"whether the proposal is in accordance with the Neighbourhood Centre Design Assessment Criteria in Appendix 29D.1".

The Appendix sets out the assessment criteria under several "Design Elements". Accompanying illustrations are intended to support the text and represent good design solutions, but are not intended to represent the only design solution. All illustrations are illustrative and indicative only.

Information Requirements

The applicant shall provide a written assessment describing how the criteria for each Design Element are addressed. Applicants will have to demonstrate that the provisions of the criteria have been acknowledged.

It is recognised that certain proposals will not achieve absolute accordance with all criteria. Where necessary, in regard to a criterion demonstrably not met, the applicant shall explain with reference to the explanation for the particular Design Element:

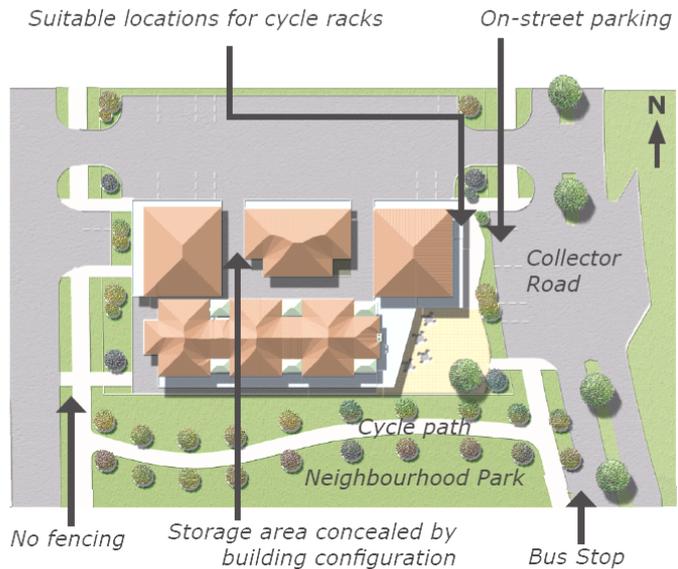
- *Whether site constraints inhibit the ability to address the criterion, and/or;*
- *how the intention of the criterion is met by the proposal, and/or;*
- *whether the proposal represents a better design solution than that suggested by the criterion.*

Design Element 1: Planning, Position and Orientation

1. A Neighbourhood Centre should be a single contiguous development located only in areas shown on a Structure Plan (refer Part 54) or Planning Map 105.
2. A Neighbourhood Centre should be located on a site that directly abuts the relevant Neighbourhood Park, a collector road, and at least one other road.
3. If possible, fencing on the boundary between a Neighbourhood Centre and the related Neighbourhood Park should be avoided. Any fencing forward of the line of the buildings should be generally low in height and visually permeable.
4. Neighbourhood Centres should accommodate most associated parking on site, but should provide some on-street parking on one or more of the frontage roads, preferably in 90 degree bays.
5. Where buildings do not front roads, landscaped areas should be provided between the building and the main road frontage, and parking in these areas should not be the most visually prominent element.
6. Outdoor storage should be concealed from view from the Neighbourhood Park and adjoining residential dwellings by the configuration of the building, and concealed from view from the public roads by either the configuration of the building (preferred) or screen fencing.
7. Cycle racks should be provided at a convenient and sheltered location.

Illustrative Examples of Neighbourhood Centres

Illustrative Neighbourhood Centre Concept for Helenslee Block (Pokeno Structure Plan)



Illustrative Neighbourhood Centre Concept for Hitchen Block (Pokeno Structure Plan)



Explanation:

Design Element 1 pertains to aspects of site planning of Neighbourhood Centres in relation to adjoining features.

Where the Neighbourhood Centre is shown on a Structure Plan this will be in a location best suited to serve growth area covered by that Structure Plan. The intention of Neighbourhood Centres is to provide a focal point for the residential growth areas. It is also to provide supporting convenience retail facilities central to the most significant residential growth areas, provided that the scale of such activities will not detrimentally affect the viability of a Town Centre. Criterion 1 clarifies this.

The locations, through structure planning, have been carefully chosen as destinations maximising opportunities for residents to easily walk, cycle or drive to, as well as being places to stop off at, as part of another journey. The centres are also intended to support usage and enjoyment of a Neighbourhood Park that will be created as part of the subdivision process. Criterion 2 thus describes site position requirements in more detail than can be determined from a Structure Plan alone.

The relationship of the built development to the Neighbourhood Park and any adjoining collector road is very important. To achieve this, buildings will typically be built along much of the interface with the Park and road (and without parking or vehicle accessways between the building and the Park and road). Development which opens out directly towards the Park site with outside spaces (e.g. patios with outside café tables) is strongly encouraged. Service, loading and storage areas must not occur along the park frontage.

Consequently, fences and walls (including retaining walls) along a Park boundary or in between a boundary and the building line should generally be avoided. If used, fencing should be only low (1.2m or less). The word "generally" recognizes that exceptions might be made where there is a clearly functional need for a section of higher fencing forward of the line of the building. An example would be where a childcare component of the facility has an outdoor play area abutting the park which requires a higher fence for safety reasons, or a small section of access or loading area requires screening from the park. As a guide, not more than 20% of the boundary should be fenced in this way, and the fence should be open if possible, or constructed of a material that will not attract tagging.

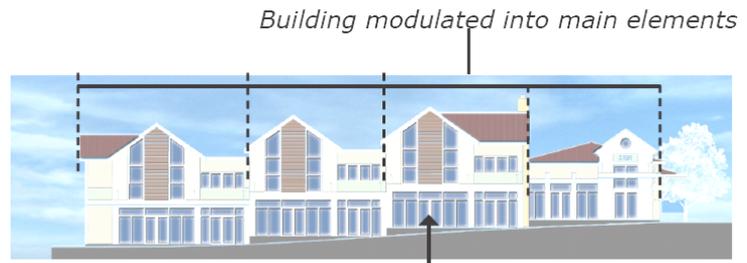
Criteria 5 and 6 relate to parking design. Convenient parking is often part of the success for neighbourhood retail facility. Thus some on-street 90 degree parking is encouraged. The design and location of the parking should not dominate the development when viewed from adjoining public areas, particularly the park and the collector road. Parking areas broken up into two or three locations would be appropriate as well as convenient for users.

Ideally, all storage should be internal because outdoor storage, particularly of skips and wheelie bins, requires careful design consideration, particularly given that the sites envisaged for neighbourhood centres will have the majority or even all of the boundaries abutting public space. The configuration of the building to internalise or hide the outdoor storage is the best solution, though screen fencing may be used for views from the public road. Not being able to see an outdoor storage facility (or significant associated screen fencing) from the Neighbourhood Park should be the priority.

Criterion 7 has a requirement for bike racks. A particularly convenient location is likely to be close to a related collector road, depending on the configuration of the development.

Design Element 2: External Appearance

1. The buildings of a Neighbourhood Centre should be built generally along the boundaries with the related Neighbourhood Park and collector road, and designed to address these respective boundaries with an active frontage treatment.



High proportion of openings

2. When viewed from any public space the buildings should create visual interest through modulation, articulation, roof form, openings, and variation, and avoid a continuous flat or blank building frontage to the public space.

Canopies along and near collector road frontage



3. Canopies should be provided along the collector road frontage (as a minimum) and other locations as required for dry access to the main entry(s) from at least some of the car parking.

4. Buildings should exhibit proportions and forms complementary to nearby residential development.

Height proportions and forms complementary to residential development



5. Building height should provide interest and identity or define local landmarks.

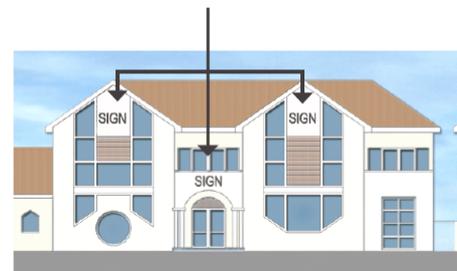
Area of taller building near corner, highlighted with architectural element (chimney)

6. Corners of buildings should be emphasised and are appropriate locations for architectural elements that are higher than the other buildings on-site.



7. Signage should be designed to fit with the building and be located on the building rather than being freestanding. (Refer Rule 15.4).

Signage at appropriate locations within elevation



Explanation:

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE DESIGN ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Design Element 2 pertains to the public face of the built development, in particular where it relates to a collector road and a Neighbourhood Park which the Neighbourhood Centre site will abut.

Unattractive car parking and vehicle circulation areas at the fronts of properties dominate many existing retail developments, with buildings set well back from the road frontage. Criterion 1 encourages the siting and elevational design of buildings (and de facto the concealing of parking areas) in a manner which provides active definition to the most important edges of the development and promotes informal surveillance of adjoining roads and the Neighbourhood Park.

The term "active frontage" may be interpreted as meaning developments that address a Park and collector road rather than turning their backs on them. On these elevations the main entries and windows should be concentrated, and a significant proportion of doors, windows and display frontages at the ground floor level should be included. Blank walls should be avoided, particularly at ground level.

Neighbourhood Centres will be highly visible from adjoining roads, and typically from the adjoining Neighbourhood Park. Careful attention to design detail is required at the public interface generally to avoid any adverse external visual or scale effects, to contribute positively to the amenity and enjoyment of the road and Neighbourhood Park, and to help ensure that the Neighbourhood Centre becomes a valued and highly regarded centrepiece for its local community.

Canopies are required in Criterion 3 for the shelter that they provide, and the opportunity they present to break up the mass of a building.

A Neighbourhood Centre will be larger in floor area and bulk than a typical dwelling, so Criterion 4 encourages reference to the proportions and forms of nearby residential development. This is likely to be achieved by the use of design devices such as breaking the building bulk up into "house size" elements, and utilising roof forms, similar to those found in the area (i.e likely to be pitched roofs and domestic materials). Secondary elements such as balconies, canopies, porches, bay windows, dormers and pediments should also be used to break up continuous mass and large roof forms.

Two storey buildings are encouraged under Criterion 5 to give prominence and identity to the development, provide an edge to the Park, and provide opportunity for a mix of uses. Corners of the development, in particular the corner formed by the boundaries with the Neighbourhood Park and collector road, are appropriate places for this emphasis to be added.

Design Element 3: Mix of Activities

1. If possible, a Neighbourhood Centre should contain a mix of activities and should have several separate tenancies for the whole complex.

2. Activities which open out towards (and ideally have outdoor spaces facing or overlooking the edge of) a Neighbourhood Park, such as cafes and restaurants, are particularly encouraged.



Cafes and restaurants adjacent to park

3. Any childcare facility should have a safe and secure outdoor play area and a separate access. Parking and drop off for childcare activities should be provided in an identified and marked area close to the entrance to the childcare facility.

4. Any upstairs residential dwellings should be provided with a usable and private balcony or similar outdoor space, directly accessible from the main living area. (Refer to standards of Part 29D.)

5. Glazing from the main living area of upstairs residential dwellings should have outlook over the Neighbourhood Park or a road as a preference. (Refer to standards of Part 29D.)



Outdoor area for cafe

Demarcated childcare drop-off

Childcare outdoor play (open fencing)

6. The main entrance to the upstairs residential dwellings from the outside should be provided separately from the entrance to the ground floor tenancies.



Balconies for upstairs residential dwellings or offices facing park

Explanation:

Design Element 3 pertains to the mix of activities in a Neighbourhood Centre.

By definition a Neighbourhood Centre may include retail development (shops, cafes, etc.) and commercial services (offices) that service the day-to-day needs of the local community, childcare centres, and residential dwellings above ground level.

Criterion 1 calls for a mix of these types of activities in a Neighbourhood Centre in order to add variety and choice of services, while emphasising the importance of local convenience shops (dairies etc) as part of the mix. Cafes and restaurants are also encouraged (Criterion 2) because of their capacity to provide informal security for the Neighbourhood Park over longer hours, and their potential to establish a sense of place and focus for the neighbourhood.

Childcare facilities may also be part of the mix, provided certain design issues are recognised (Criterion 3).

The opportunity to live in close proximity to where one works or shops adds to both the lifestyles of the residents and the vitality of the neighbourhood and contributes to after-hours security. Accordingly, residential activities above ground level are encouraged in Neighbourhood Centres. Any such development is expected to be apartment-style, and will enable a lifestyle less dependent on large areas of private open space.

Criteria 4 through 6 are intended to provide additional guidance in the consideration of residential components above other activities in mixed-use developments, should any be proposed.