

## **Attachment 5 - Traditional Subdivision and Development Patterns in SCA Overlay – Residential**

The SCA – Residential demonstrates traditional residential subdivision and development patterns typical of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Subdivision and development in the areas covered by this overlay generally occurred in three phases, each with a distinct character and clear beginning and end points marked by shifts in transport technology and planning regulations and approaches.

### **FIRST PHASE 1860s-1880s**

The earliest subdivisions in the SCA-Residential began during the 1860s and continued to the 1880s. This phase of development and subdivision is characterized by small-scale and largely ad-hoc development of “the walking suburbs”. Areas that represent this phase of development include parts of St Mary’s Bay, Ponsonby, Freeman’s Bay, Arch Hill, Eden Terrace, Parnell and Grafton.

These areas were the original “walking suburbs” because their proximity to the city enabled access to employment before public transportation was widely available or affordable.

Subdivision and development in these areas was generally informal. Residential sections in the walking suburbs were often formed as part of a series of small subdivisions of original Crown grants, sometimes taking place over a number of decades. Lot sizes tended to be small, ranging from under 300m<sup>2</sup> up to around 450m<sup>2</sup>. Lot widths were narrow (around 10-12m) and resulted in higher density development with houses closely spaced to each other and the road.

Houses were generally built close to or on the front boundary with small set-backs of 0-3m. Where small setbacks existed, houses were generally open to the street, had low timber fences and may have included a small garden.

Housing types in these areas were predominantly one- and two-storey workers’ cottages and Victorian villas, with some variation and later in-fill development.

The road pattern generally followed an orthogonal grid, though there is some variation to take into account topography. Prior to the *Plans of Towns Regulation Act 1875*, there were no standard road widths, and therefore many roads in these areas tend to be narrow – some as narrow as 10m. Footpaths are also very narrow and there are generally no grass berms or street trees, resulting in a very urban character.

### **SECOND PHASE 1880s-1920**

The second phase of development began during the 1880s and continued through to the end of World War I. This phase is characterized by a significant increase in Auckland’s population and commensurate increase in demand for land and housing. This demand was met through the subdivision and development the small farms that once occupied the isthmus beyond the city centre suburbs. Unlike the first phase, subdivision and development during the second phase was more formal, guided by new regulations on road widths, lot sizes and land surveying.

Further driving development during this phase was the introduction of the tram service. Horse-drawn trams began operating in 1884 and electric trams were introduced 1902. Together with improvements to the road network, this phase marked a period of substantial residential growth. Areas that represent this phase of development include: Grey Lynn, parts of Herne Bay, Kingsland, Mount Eden, Mount St John, parts of Balmoral, parts of Epsom, parts of Ellerslie and Otahuhu.

Residential growth in these areas often occurred quickly, with large lots being subdivided and developed within a short period of time, sometimes speculatively. This type of development resulted in generous, more regular-sized lots and a cohesive architectural language.

During this phase of development, lot sizes were generally larger (usually 450m<sup>2</sup>-600m<sup>2</sup>), reflecting a more spacious suburban quality. Lot widths were also larger, usually 12-15m. Houses were located toward the front boundary, and typically occupied much of the width of their sites. Toward the end of this phase, some properties incorporated off-street parking, such as garaging or carports in the front or side yards.

Houses were constructed toward the front boundary, with setbacks ranging from 4-10m. As with the first phase, houses were open to the street with low timber fences or basalt walls. Larger front yards provided opportunities for landscaping. Well-vegetated gardens, with trees and shrubs were common.

Housing types in these areas were predominantly Victorian and Edwardian villas, including transitional villas and bungalows toward the end of this phase.

The road pattern generally followed an orthogonal grid, though there is some variation to take into account topography. In response to *Plans of Towns Regulations Act 1875*, street widths were standardized at 20m or 30m. Streets also included footpaths, grass berms and street trees, lending a much more suburban character to these areas.

### **THIRD PHASE 1920-1940**

The third phase of development began during the 1920s and continued until the outset of World War II. In 1926, the *Town Planning Act* introduced functional zoning to further prevent ad hoc growth. Although the electric tram service continued to be extended through the isthmus during this phase of development, suburban growth was largely characterized by an increased provision for private car ownership. Areas that represent this phase of development include parts of Balmoral, Sandringham, Avondale, parts of Ellerslie, and parts of Epsom.

Another key concept that emerged during this phase was the town planning movement, which was adopted from overseas and largely centred on the idea that the built environment could have a positive effect on the health and well-being of people. Out of this idea came the Garden Suburb, which focused on the health benefits of open spaces, sunlight and vegetation, and championed large lots, curvilinear street patterns, reserve land and recreational community facilities.

Lot sizes became increasingly irregular, but were often large, generally 750m<sup>2</sup>-1000m<sup>2</sup>, heralding the advent of the quarter-acre section. Likewise, lot widths were increasingly irregular, but generally averaged 15m-20m. New residential development during this phase often included garaging or carports in the side or backyards.

Generally, houses were still located toward the front of the property with 4-10m setbacks. Front boundary treatments became less formal, and landscaping (as opposed to fences or walls) emerged as a means of providing privacy. Many houses, however, still included a low timber fence, basalt wall or hedge. Large front yards provided ample space for gardens, including a wide variety of specimen trees, flowering bushes and structures, such as archways, pergolas and birdbaths.

The predominant housing type in these areas was the bungalow, however, there were also early state houses and exotic styles such as Spanish Mission, Art Deco and Moderne. There was also a revival of the English Cottage and Georgian styles. Houses were larger and less formally arranged, with increased glazing and connection to the outdoors. Increased extension of utilities throughout the isthmus meant that these houses were built to include amenities such as indoor plumbing and electricity.

The road pattern began to move away from the orthogonal grid and toward curvilinear streets and tree-lined avenues. Street widths continued to be standardized to 20m or 30m, and foot paths, grass berms and street trees were all key to the ideals of the Garden Suburb.

## **SOURCES**

Schedule 15: Special Character Schedule, Statements and Maps (section 15.1.1-15.1.5.1.12)

Special Character Areas Overlay – Residential: Isthmus A

Matthews, A. (2012.) *Residential 1 Zone Study*. Plan Change 163.