

## 3 Special Character

### 3.1 Business and residential special character areas

#### Overlay description

This overlay seeks to retain and manage identified special character values of specific residential and business areas. Each overlay is supported by a special character statement identifying the key attributes or qualities of the area for maintenance, retention and enhancement. Assessment of proposals for activities, development and modifications to places within special character areas will be considered against the special character statements.

Controls have been placed on use, development and demolition of buildings to manage change in these areas. The level of control varies according to the intent of the overlay and may be more restrictive than the underlying zone.

Special character areas are identified as having either business or residential values. Special character areas are provided for as follows:

1. Special Character business
2. Special Character residential including:
  - a. Helensville
  - b. Isthmus A
  - c. Isthmus B
  - d. Isthmus C
  - e. North Shore
  - f. General

#### Objectives

##### All special character areas

1. The special character values of the area, as identified in the special character statement, are maintained and enhanced, including the history, community associations and the overall notable or distinctive aesthetic or physical qualities of the area.
2. The physical attributes that define, contribute to, or support the character of the area are retained, including:
  - a. built form, design and architectural values of buildings and their contexts
  - b. streetscape qualities, including historical form, subdivision and patterns of streets and roads
  - c. landscape qualities and/or natural features including topography, vegetation and open spaces.
3. Activities and development that detract from or undermine the special character of the area are avoided.

##### Isthmus A

4. The survival of the form and pattern of subdivision, buildings and streetscape in Auckland's early-established residential neighbourhoods (as identified in the special character statement), is ensured.

##### Isthmus B and Isthmus C

5. The architectural values of buildings which contribute to the special character of the streetscape (as identified in the special character statement) are maintained.

##### Isthmus B

6. The landscape qualities of those residential areas which display a special blend of built and natural features, generally involving period housing, coupled with the presence of trees (as identified in the special character statement) are maintained.

### **Isthmus C**

7. The landscape qualities of those residential areas which display a special blend of built and natural features, generally involving period housing, coupled with distinctive landforms and the presence of trees (as identified in the special character statement) are maintained.
8. The visual and physical integrity of outstanding volcanic features such as volcanic cones, tuff rings and explosion craters (in residential areas) are protected.
9. The special character of the residential areas which occupy volcanic cones, volcanic features and particular coastal cliffs ~~is maintained and protected~~, and the resulting visual harmony and coherence relationship between the legacy character of development and the natural character of the wider landform are maintained ~~and enhanced~~.

### **North Shore**

10. The landscape qualities of residential areas that display a special blend of built and natural features, generally involving period housing coupled with the presence of trees, are maintained and enhanced.
11. The topographic qualities and the distinctive landforms that contributed to the development of built form and subdivision patterns in residential areas are maintained and enhanced.

### **Policies**

#### **All Special Character overlays**

1. Require all development and redevelopment to have regard and respond to the special character and the context of the area.
2. Maintain the architectural values of buildings as identified in the special character statement.
3. Maintain and do not detract from the continuity or coherence of the special character, particularly streetscape qualities through alterations, additions and modifications to the built form.
4. Retain and enhance the built form, design and architectural values of the area by controlling new buildings, alterations, additions and modifications in a way that:
  - a. is sympathetic in design, scale and massing, and is of a compatible form which contributes to, supports or defines the special character of the area
  - b. enables the removal of additions and features that compromise the special character of the building or wider area
  - c. minimises the loss of fabric and encouraging maintenance and repair
  - d. requires new fabric and surface finishes to be compatible with the age, detailing and original finish
  - e. recovers or reveals character values of buildings and features.

#### **Protection and use of Special Character business overlay**

5. Identify and protect the character of the areas that reflect historical patterns of commercial development.
6. Identify and manage individual buildings that either support or contribute to the special character, according to the following descriptions:
  - a. character-defining – makes a considerable contribution to the character of the area because of historical, physical attributes and/or social values
  - b. character-supporting – makes a moderate contribution to the character of the area. The building should contribute to the appearance, quality, and identity of the area and should be consistent with the values of character-defining places.
7. Require new buildings or additions to existing buildings, which adjoin or are adjacent to character-defining or character-supporting buildings, to respond sympathetically to the context of the area by providing contemporary and high-quality design which respects and enhances the built form and streetscape of the area.

8. Require the height of development to be compatible and respect the special character and scale of development.
9. In the case of Howick special character business overlay, particular attention is to be given to the intimate scale of buildings in Picton Street, the views to and from Stockade Hill and from the Ridge Road entry to Howick.

**Alterations to buildings in Special Character residential North Shore overlay**

10. Require car parking and garaging, where appropriate, to respond to the context and traditional streetscape of the area. Encourage, where practical, the construction of garages and carports to the rear of, underneath (where appropriate in terms of topography), or alongside the building on the site to ensure the front garden and façade remain visible to the streetscape.

**Alterations to buildings in Special Character business overlay**

11. Require alterations, for special character defining buildings, to be in keeping with and sympathetic to, the established context, adjacent character buildings, and development patterns. Materials should be similar or sympathetic to the existing and should retain or reveal the architectural form, proportion and style of the building.
12. Require alterations, for special character supporting buildings, to be sympathetic to the materials, scale, massing, form and proportion of the existing building, and the context of the area.

**Total or substantial demolition of buildings in all Special Character overlays**

13. Avoid the removal, demolition or substantial demolition of buildings and features that define, contribute to or support the special character of the area.
14. Support, in general, the demolition of buildings and features that detract from the character of the area.
15. Require any proposal to demolish or remove a special character defining or supporting building, or a significant part of the building, to be accompanied by an assessment of effects on the streetscape of the area and the structural integrity of the building.

**Total or substantial demolition of identified special character defining and supporting buildings in Special Character business overlay**

16. Require any proposal, for demolition or removal of a special character defining or supporting building, to demonstrate that the loss of the building would not:
  - a. diminish the character of the area
  - b. represent the loss of a place that has considerable heritage value in its own right
  - c. disrupt important links between other special character defining or supporting places or features in the area.

**Total or substantial demolition of character buildings in Special Character residential North Shore overlay**

17. Retain houses that contribute to the historical context and streetscape of the neighbourhood, and provide a visual record of traditional settlement patterns.

**Redevelopment and/or new buildings in Special Character overlays**

18. Manage development and change to retain and enhance the places, features, qualities and attributes that contribute to the context and streetscape of the area.
19. Encourage the retention of features such as stone walls, fences, paths and historic plantings.
20. Avoid subdivision, use and development where it is unsympathetic to the historical form and pattern of the area.

21. Require the design of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings to maintain the special character of the context of those buildings.

#### **Protection and use of Special Character general overlay**

22. Identify and manage individual buildings or landscape features that either support or contribute to the special character of the area, according to the following descriptions:
  - a. character-defining – makes a considerable contribution to the special character of the area because of legacy, physical attributes, streetscape, landscape and/or social values
  - b. character-supporting – makes a moderate contribution to the special character of the area. The place should contribute to the appearance, quality, and identity of the area and should reinforce the values of special character-defining places.
23. Require development and change within the special character area to retain and maintain those features, qualities and attributes that contribute to the special character, such as:
  - a. subdivision pattern and density
  - b. built form and original fabric
  - c. location on the site
  - d. streetscape and context
  - e. visual relationship with the street or landscape features
  - f. landscape, vegetation and topography.
24. Allow only those activities which are compatible with the special character of the area, with limited scope for other activities where this protects and retains the historical character of the area.

#### **Special Character residential Isthmus A**

25. Maintain the authentic character of the zone in relation to activities and development, and by preventing other work which is not in sympathy with the special character.
26. Require renovation and new building construction in a manner which maintains the historical form, pattern, intensity and grain of buildings and streetscape in the areas to which the overlay zone is applied.
27. Maintain the special level of amenity that exists in the area, against the adverse effects of more intensive non-residential activities.
28. Impose provisions which seek to maintain and as appropriate enhance the amenity of the streetscape appearance of these areas through controlling structures in the front yard and through road maintenance and improvements compatible with the character of the vicinity.
29. Provide for activities to be conducted in existing buildings that can ensure the restoration and maintenance of the fabric of any building on the site, where the building is of the characteristic ~~historical~~ period.
30. Encourage, where practical, the construction of garages and carports to the rear of, underneath (where appropriate in terms of topography), or alongside the building on the site to ensure the front garden and façade remain visible to the streetscape.
31. Control the demolition/removal of buildings constructed prior to 1940 where they contribute positively to the special character of the streetscape.

#### **Special Character residential Isthmus B**

32. Ensure renovation of existing buildings and new buildings maintain the legacy ~~historical~~ form and pattern of buildings, open space and distinctive streetscapes of areas included in the overlay zone.
33. Maintain the architectural values of period housing predominant in the street.
34. Control the demolition/removal of buildings constructed prior to 1940 where they contribute positively to the special character of the streetscape.

35. Maintain the quality of spaciousness which characterises areas included in the overlay zone.
36. Require the retention of the larger trees, located on private property, roads and reserves, which give areas included in the overlay zone a distinctive character.
37. Require replacement planting to maintain the landscape qualities and spaciousness of areas in this overlay zone. Replacement with indigenous trees will be encouraged when this is the traditional pattern of planting in the area or when an indigenous tree has been removed.
38. Ensure that the spacious and well-landscaped front yards which are typical of land in this overlay zone retain a reasonable degree of visibility from the street.

Streetscape Character, Streetscape Value or Character of the Streetscape means: The image and perception of a street which includes the composition of elements in a street, that combine to create the urban landscape, including the natural and built features and the spatial qualities of the street.

This definition applies to only the Special Character residential Isthmus B overlay area and does not apply to any other parts of the Unitary Plan.

#### **Special Character residential Isthmus C**

39. Control subdivision, use and development to ensure that natural and cultural heritage values of volcanic features are maintained.
40. Ensure that new development does not encroach visually on the natural character of the land above the existing residential development on volcanic features.
41. Restrict any earthworks to a minimum so as not to detrimentally affect the form and texture of volcanic landscapes.
42. Ensure that no new development in the overlay visually offends or competes with the form, texture and natural character of the volcanic cone, volcanic features or coastal cliff it occupies.
43. Maintain the scale, massing and colour of development, and maintaining and enhancing the pattern of vegetative cover in the overlay as necessary to protect the natural character.
44. Maintain the authenticity of character of land included in the overlay zone in relation to activities, development, and by preventing other work which is not in sympathy with the identified special character.
45. Ensure additions and alterations to existing buildings and new buildings maintain the legacy form and pattern of buildings, open space and distinctive streetscapes of land included in the overlay.
46. Maintain the architectural values of period housing predominant in the street.
47. Control the demolition/removal of buildings constructed prior to 1940 where they significantly contribute to the special character of the streetscape.
48. Maintain the open or treed character of land included in the overlay zone.
49. Require the retention of the larger trees, located on private property, roads and reserves, which give land included in the overlay a distinctive character.
50. Require, where appropriate, replacement planting of trees to maintain the landscape qualities and spaciousness of areas in this overlay.

51. Ensure that the spacious and well-landscaped front yards which are typical of land in this overlay zone retain a reasonable degree of visibility from the street.

Streetscape Character, Streetscape Value or Character of the Streetscape means: The perception of a street, arising out of the relationship between the built features (houses, fences and other structures) and the surrounding distinctive natural landforms over which the street is laid out. Important to this perception is the disposition of the built features in those landforms (volcanic cones, volcanic features and coastal cliffs) and how these then define the landscape quality of the street.

This definition applies to only the Special Character Residential Isthmus C overlay areas and does not apply to any other parts of the Unitary Plan.