Multi-unit housing design guidance

Ōtautahi Christchurch

ccc.govt.nz

Christchurch City Council

Date of release	Sections	Version
October 2025	Introduction chapter; SItes, context and housing types; 1.0-1.5; Appendices A. & B.	1

Tips for viewing:

- For compatible PDF viewers, activate '**two-page view**' and '**show cover page**' (or similar) for optimal viewing.
- Referenced pages or sections are hyperlinked to support navigation, including the page footer and chapter title text.

Contents

Italics shows sections yet to be developed (titles tbc)


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Introduction

Multi-unit housing is a common feature in our neighbourhoods offering more housing choice and helping meet the needs of a growing population. To support Ōtautahi Christchurch continue to be a great place to live, this technical design guide has been developed to ensure new townhouses and apartments work well for residents, neighbours, and the wider community.

Purpose of the guidance

The Christchurch District Plan encourages high quality residential environments through policy and objectives, and rules and design principles specifically for multi-unit housing.

The main purpose of this guidance is:

> ***to help developers, designers and planners understand the District Plan's aims through identifying good design practices and solutions for known and anticipated design challenges.***

It also aims to:

- Make the design and resource consent process smoother, including more consistent and efficient, reducing delays and expense.
- Be a practical and relevant tool that supports conversations between applicants and the Council.
- Be a publicly available resource that helps to raise awareness of good design and its benefits for residents and neighbourhoods.
- Inspire ideas and approaches to townhouses and apartments that will make them desirable places to live for a wide range of residents.

Design priorities

This guidance focuses on known and anticipated issues for medium- and high-density multi-unit housing development in Ōtautahi, rather than more comprehensive 'best practice' that can be sought elsewhere. The design priorities of the guidance are as follows:

1. **Engagement with the street and on-site communal spaces.**
2. **Good legibility for sense of ownership and safety.**
3. **Well-considered built form with visual interest to break up building bulk.**
4. **High-quality amenity from well-located outdoor living areas, trees and planting.**
5. **Avoidance of the visually-dominating effects of cars, parking and garages.**
6. **Integration of adequate space for bins, cycle storage and lighting.**
7. **Balance of the purpose and effects of windows, doors and boundary treatments.**
8. **Practical solutions as part of a holistic and sustainable approach to addressing design issues.**

Background

This technical guidance is informed by the recurring design challenges identified in the day-to-day assessment of resource consents and through the monitoring of completed, built developments.

It has been developed through a multidisciplinary approach, with technical expertise and input from within the Council, and is also informed by policy, best practice and review of other relevant guidance (refer below).

As it has been developed on a topic-by-topic basis, each section includes the date of its most recent review. The first suite of design guidance was released in October 2025.

District Plan context

The District Plan enables multi-unit development and greater residential intensification in and around the Central City and most suburban centres, giving effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020. In addition, there are other residential zones (including, but not limited to, Residential Medium Density 'RMD' and Suburban Density Transition 'RSDT') where multi-unit developments are anticipated. This provides for an increased supply of housing and choice, with the objective of achieving high-quality residential environments (District Plan objectives 14A.2.1/14.2.1 and 14A.2.5/14.2.4).

Residential Design Principles

One of the main urban design-related matters of discretion within the District Plan for multi-unit housing developments are the 'Residential Design Principles'. These can be found in:

- **14A.11.1** for residential zones within or close to centres **Medium Density Residential Zone (MRZ)** and **High Density Residential Zone (HRZ)**; and
- **14.15.1** for residential zones outside of centres **Residential Suburban (RS), Residential Suburban Density Transition (RSDT)** and **Residential Medium Density (RMD) zones.**

While both RDP sets address similar matters, 14A.11.1 *Principle 1: Site layout* is the main difference. This principle highlights the importance of a well-considered site layout, while the first principle under 14.15.1 is '*c. City context and character*' which relates to anticipated built form.

Both sets of Residential Design Principles are referred to in this guidance.

Useful references

Design guidance developed elsewhere within Aotearoa may also be helpful for inspiration and general advice. These include:

- Ministry for the Environment's *National Medium Density Design Guide*
- Auckland Council's *Auckland Design Manual* (online at www.aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz/)
- Kainga Ora's *Tāone Ora Urban Design Guidelines*

General design guides

How to use this guidance

This guidance can be read as a complete document or as individual sections.

The structure of this guidance includes one pre-guidance chapter and three numbered chapters, which broadly align with the development design process.

The chapters are:

Sites, context and housing types – a high-level summary of typical development site types and multi-unit housing typologies, and the benefits of site and context analysis to inform site layout and design.

1.0 Arranging the site – spatial considerations of a development's site layout and function, including building orientation, access, parking, landscape, communal open space, services and safety.

2.0 Street to front door – addresses a development's impact on the street and/or adjacent communal spaces, including approach and access to entrances and front doors.

3.0 The building(s) – considers the overall appearance of building(s), and the functionality and amenity of internal layout and private open spaces.

Each section within the numbered guidance chapters covers a particular design goal over a double-page spread. Refer to page 8 for a sample spread and key.

While the guidance sets out good design practice and solutions for known and anticipated design challenges, there will be multiple other ways of achieving the design goals.

Appendix A: Design goals relationship to Residential Design Principles (RDP) sets out a table linking guidance sections to the relevant Principles.

Common terms

There are a number of design-related terms commonly referred to throughout the guidance and not defined in the District Plan (unless indicated below). They include:

- **Multi-unit housing:** A group of three or more residential units on the same site, e.g. townhouses or apartments.
- **'Smaller' development**: Typically, up to 9 units.
- **'Larger' development**: 10+ units.

Also (in alphabetical order):

- **Accessway**: Route for pedestrians, cycles and/or vehicle movement (also see '***Shared accessway***').
- **Boundary treatment**: The means of enclosure used to demarcate and/or define private and public areas which can include fencing, walls or planting.
- **Chicane**: Alternate build-outs within an accessway to create an S-shaped line of travel to slow traffic.
- **Density**: Number of building/s in relation to land area, often referred to as 'x dwelling(s) per hectare'.
- **Habitable room:** *Refer to DP definition.*
- **Human scale:** *Refer to DP definition.*
- **Legibility**: The ability for a place to be understood, where residents and visitors can easily orient themselves without signage.
- **On-lot**: Within a private title.
- **Passive surveillance**: The ability of individuals to observe their surroundings naturally (a principle of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)).
- **Sense of ownership**: Clearly defined or implied relationship with an owner/unit.
- **Shared accessway**: Shared space 'driveway' for all users, designed to slow traffic for pedestrian safety.
- **Threshold**: Visual or physical separation, or 'buffer', demarcating two spaces, activities or uses.

Sample double-page spread layout, with key below.

Key to guidance section layout

1. **Design goal:** What the guidance section sets out to achieve.
2. **Design goal summary**: A brief description of the key issues that the section addresses. It includes an extract from the key Residential Design Principle's wording.
3. **Reference box:** States the key and other relevant Residential Design Principles, related design goals and useful references (e.g. existing Council information, NZ Standards, etc).
4. **Design expectations:** Sets out how a development proposal can address the design goal and achieve the relevant Residential Design Principles.
5. **Supporting diagram(s):** Illustrates the design expectations.
6. **Examples of good outcomes for the design goal**: Images of developments that achieve the design goal. Annotations include colour-coded references to relevant Residential Design Principles.
7. **Common issues and improvements:** Demonstrates potential improvements to common issues that better address the design goal.
8. **Chapter and design goal title**: Includes chapter colour for ease of reference.
9. **Date of last update and revision number**.
10. **Colour coding for the Residential Design Principles.**

Sites, context and housing types

Selecting a site and housing typolog(ies) are key decisions within the development process. Both come with design and access opportunities and constraints which are important considerations for testing site layout and informing development potential and yield.

Thorough **site and context analysis** at the start of the design process helps to highlight opportunities and risks early, and ensures constraints are adequately addressed, particularly if they result in District Plan non-compliances. Ōtautahi Christchurch also has some distinct characteristics, such as typically flat land and low winter sun angles, which create unique circumstances and may influence typology selection and site layout.

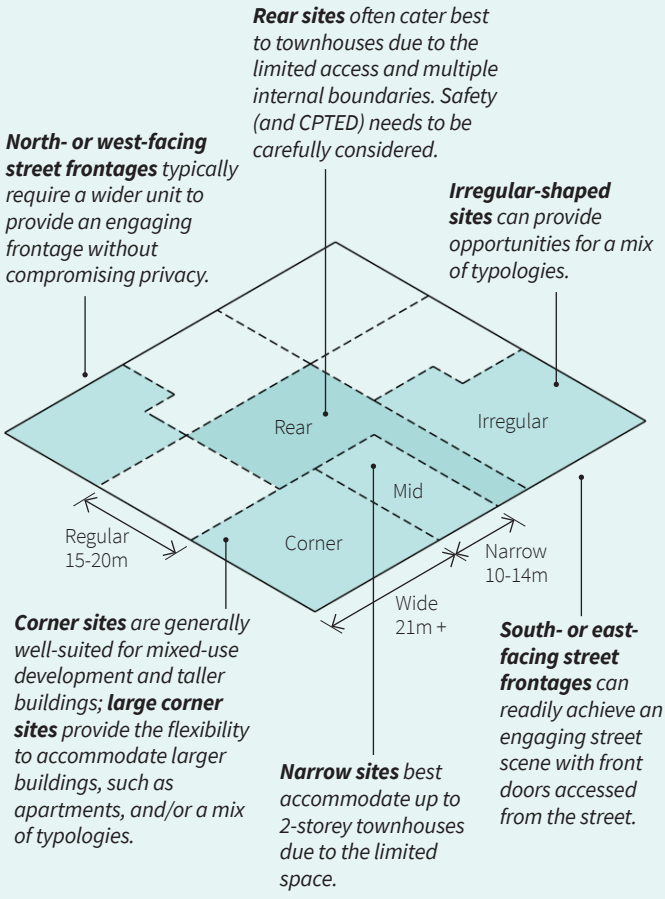
Selecting a development site

Typical development site types can be categorised by their:

- **Position within the block** (corner/end, mid-block or rear-lot with pan-handle access)
- **Street frontage extent** (narrow 10-14m, standard 15-20m or wide 21m+)
- **Size** (very small up to 500m^2, small 500-1,000m^2, medium 1,000-2,500m^2, or large* 2,500m^2+)
- **Shape** (regular or irregular)
- **Street frontage orientation** (north/west or south/east)

Particular attributes may mean sites are more appropriate for certain residential typologies, noting that most land appropriate for multi-unit residential tends to be flat within Ōtautahi.

*(*Note: 14A.11.1 Principle 1: Site layout refers to 'larger development sites' as 'exceeding 4,000m2' for the purpose of ensuring public through routes.)*



High-level guidance for typical development site types (subject to detailed site and context analysis)

Site and context analysis

Completing a site and context analysis supports the site selection and design process, in particular for achieving a well-considered site layout. Potential building placement will be guided by the features and conditions identified which may affect the choice of residential typology and, therefore, development potential.

It includes identifying:

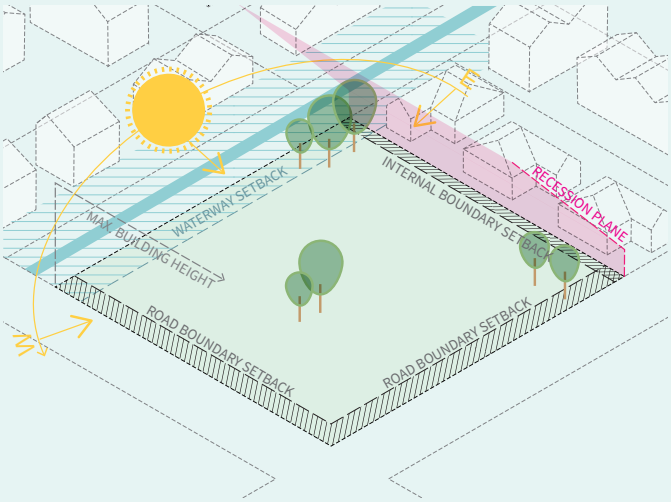
- District Plan zoning and surrounding land uses
- Existing site conditions and/or features, such as buildings, access, orientation, mature trees/vegetation, services, easements (including from waterways), topography, etc
- Neighbouring buildings and local character
- Heritage and/or cultural context and features
- Key views towards and from the site (e.g. for taller buildings or elevated sites)
- District Plan zone built form standards (e.g. setbacks, minimum/maximum height, recession planes, etc).

While some factors constrain development, others provide opportunities for adding value (e.g. retaining mature trees can provide amenity from day one) or inspiring innovation (e.g. designing windows to access outlook and views, while avoiding overlooking).

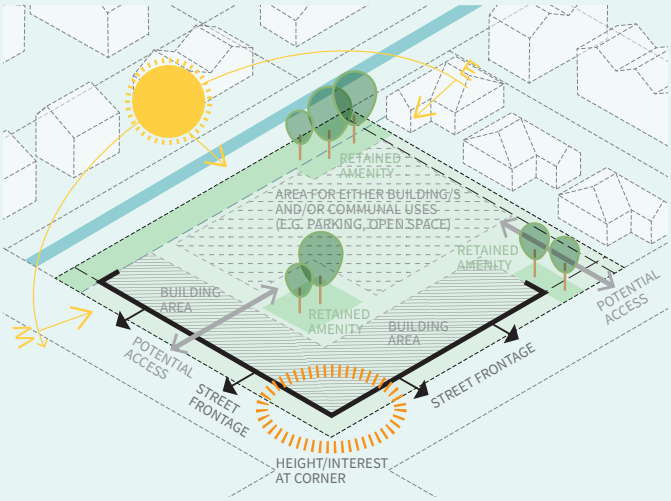
Constraints and opportunities

By effectively considering the constraints and opportunities that arise from a site and context analysis, it will help to inform site layout and building placement as the first step of the design process.

Illustrating the constraints and opportunities as diagrams is encouraged to support pre-application design conversations.



Indicative constraints diagram showing setback requirements, recession planes, maximum building height level and existing trees



Indicative opportunities diagram showing key frontages and potential locations for access, building placement (e.g. 'building areas') and communal areas including amenity

Multi-unit housing types

Medium- and high-density multi-unit housing types include townhouses and apartments, and their variations, including those listed in this section. Each has different spatial and design considerations, such as height and density, which will make them more suitable for specific sites and/or locations. Using a mix of typologies can have multiple benefits, like adaptability to different sites and facilitating a diverse resident population.

Townhouses

Semi-detached (2-3 storeys)

- Fits well in awkward or irregular-shaped sites and locations.
- Creates openness within development.

Terraced (or 'attached') (2-3 storeys)

- Compact typology using a repeated module which can be cost efficient to build.

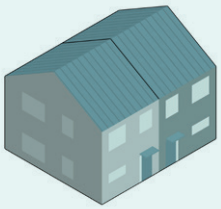
Dual-key townhouse (2-3 storeys)

- Typically two units within one ownership.
- Can provide for multi-generational living or a means to generate rental income.
- Potential to incorporate shared facilities for space efficiency (e.g. storage, laundry, etc.).

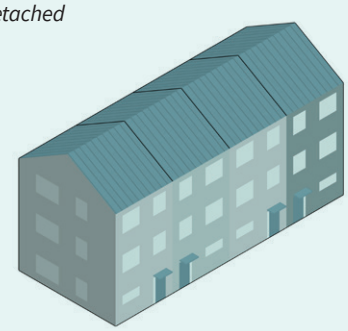
Maisonette (3-4 storeys)

- A 2-storey unit within a larger building, primarily below another 2-storey unit; or, also a 2-storey unit with apartment(s) above or above ground floor non-residential uses.
- Ground floor 2-storey units have a front door directly from the street or shared accessway.
- Front doors to upper units are either accessed at the ground floor (with internal staircase) OR via communal staircase and external corridor/'breezeway'.
- Efficient way to achieve density which manages public and private interfaces well due to being able to locate bedrooms on upper stories like other townhouses.

Where parking is provided, the above townhouse typologies are typically serviced by private garages, 'on-lot' parking or communal surface parking.



Semi-detached



Terraced

Maisonette townhouses
(left: upper units accessed via ground floor front doors and internal stairs; right: upper units accessed via private front doors along a communal breezeway)

(Note: above diagrams are indicative representations only)

Apartments

Apartments are generally well suited to being located near centres where facilities, like shops, services, and public transport, are easily accessible and where, because of this easy access, there's less need for cars. Compatible non-residential uses can be incorporated into the ground floor, where the zone permits, with separate and distinct residential entrances. Corner sites are good locations for mixed-use development.

The overall mass and impact on surroundings must be carefully considered due to the scale of apartments, as well as managing the public and private interfaces at the ground level.

Walk-up apartments (3-4 storeys)

- Smaller-scale building with potentially less maintenance due to no lift being provided.
- Circulation can be internal or external (e.g. breezeway).
- High-density typology which fits well into existing low-rise neighbourhoods.

Medium-rise apartments (up to 22m tall/6 storeys)

- High-density typology which can support town centres at a comfortable scale.
- Can include 'maisonette' or two-storey unit(s) (e.g. at ground level or as 'penthouse' units).

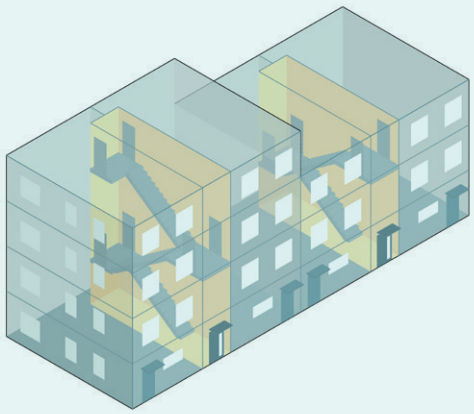
High-rise apartments (22m+ tall/above 6 storeys)

- High-quality design is necessary due to high potential impact on views and role as a landmark building.
- Can include 'maisonette' or two-storey unit(s) (e.g. at ground level or as 'penthouse' units).

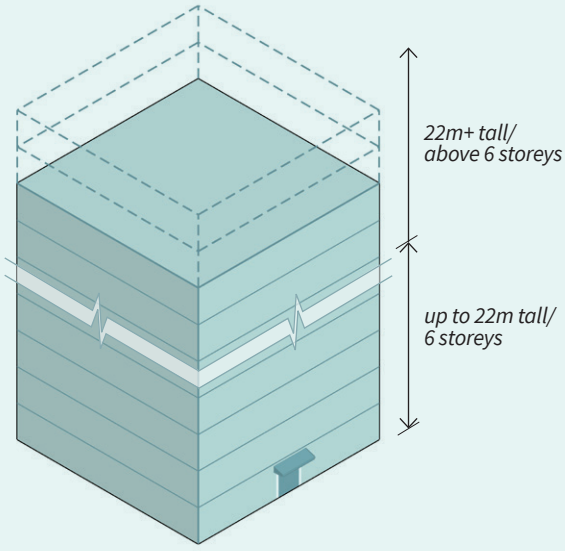
Dual-key apartments (typically 1 storey, in any of the above)

- Typically two units within one ownership.
- Can improve affordability due to the potential to incorporate private shared facilities (between two units) which maintains a high level of amenity, as well as space efficiency (e.g. storage, laundry, etc.).

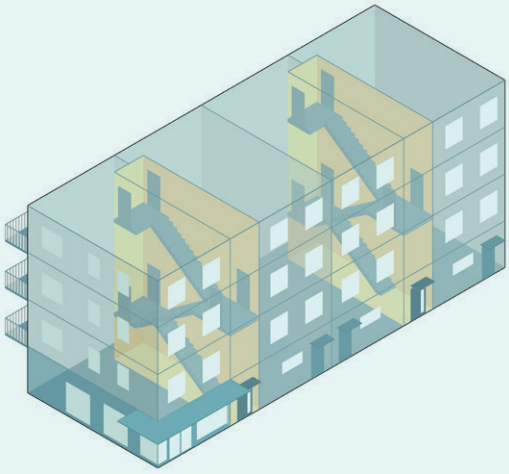
Where parking is provided, the above apartment typologies are typically serviced by either communal garages (e.g. podium or basement) or communal surface parking.



Walk-up apartments (showing internalised access to upper units)



Medium- or high-rise apartments



Walk-up apartments with non-residential uses on the ground floor corner, and separate and internalised access to upper units.

(Note: above diagrams are indicative representations only)

Multi-unit housing development examples

Semi-detached townhouses with paired front doors to create a welcoming entrance to both units.

Terraced townhouses benefit from thoughtful design detailing and use of materials to help break up long blocks of development.

3-storey townhouses and maisonettes which have side-by-side front doors, where the second door provides access to the upper 2-storey unit via internal stairs.

2.5-storey terraced townhouses with a mews house (single-storey unit over garages) located to the rear.

Walk-up apartments provide higher-density living within a comfortable building height for low-rise centres and neighbourhoods.

Medium-rise apartments with a good level of design consideration and architectural detail to ensure it achieves a human scale.

High-rise apartments require high-quality design due to their scale, effects on views, and potential to become landmark features, depending on their location and surrounding context.

These mixed-use apartments include commercial uses on the ground floor corner, adjacent to ground floor residential units, which provide active edges to the corner.

1.0 Arranging the site

This chapter focuses on the design goals that affect site layout and, therefore, the potential development yield due to basic space and functionality requirements. As a 'step' within the design process, arranging the various elements on a site comes after site and context analysis where potential constraints and opportunities have been identified.

By addressing site layout and considering the interrelationships between elements early, good urban design outcomes with practical and sustainable benefits will be more easily achieved. It can also minimise the need to make changes at later stages, saving time and money within the resource consent process.

The following sections include design expectations for achieving:

1.1 Public 'fronts' and private 'backs'
1.2 Safe site access and movement
1.3 Well-integrated surface parking
1.4 Well-integrated garages
1.5 Convenient and secure cycle storage
1.6 Fit-for-purpose bin storage
1.7 Safe and pleasant external lighting
1.8 Space for trees and planting
1.9 Communal outdoor living space

[Italics indicates sections yet to be developed - titles tbc]

Key 14A.11.1/14.15.1 Residential Design Principle(s): *2/d. Relationship to the street and public open spaces*

Other relevant RDP: *1, 3/e., 4/f., 5/g., 6/h.*

Related design goals: 2.1 Engaging building frontages; 2.2 Well-integrated level differences; 2.3 Appropriate boundary treatments

1.1 Public 'fronts' and private 'backs'

When the public 'fronts' of buildings engage with, and contribute to, adjacent streets, on-site communal space, and any other adjacent public open spaces, they ***"contribute to them being lively, safe and attractive"***. When private 'backs' of buildings face each other, and/or away from public areas, it keeps private amenity and service areas secure and exclusive. **Establishing these relationships supports good street scenes and personal privacy** and reduces the likelihood of residents of feeling overexposed and using ad-hoc means to regain their privacy.

Where some outdoor living space (OLS) is unavoidable along the street frontage due to site orientation, proposals should still achieve public 'fronts' and private 'backs' for the reasons above.

Design expectations:

(A) **Public 'fronts' at the street boundary**, including both boundaries for corner sites, are:

- engaging along the built frontage with recognisable front doors/main entrances accessed directly from the street, and ground floor windows from kitchens or living rooms (not bedrooms for privacy sensitivity),
- defined with visible planting to create a public threshold (e.g. front garden, with low or no boundary treatments), and
- not dominated by services space and/or utilities.

(B) **Public 'fronts' within the site (e.g. 'semi-public' frontages which face on-site communal areas)**, such as accessways, parking areas, etc, are treated similarly to the street ('**A**', above). In addition:

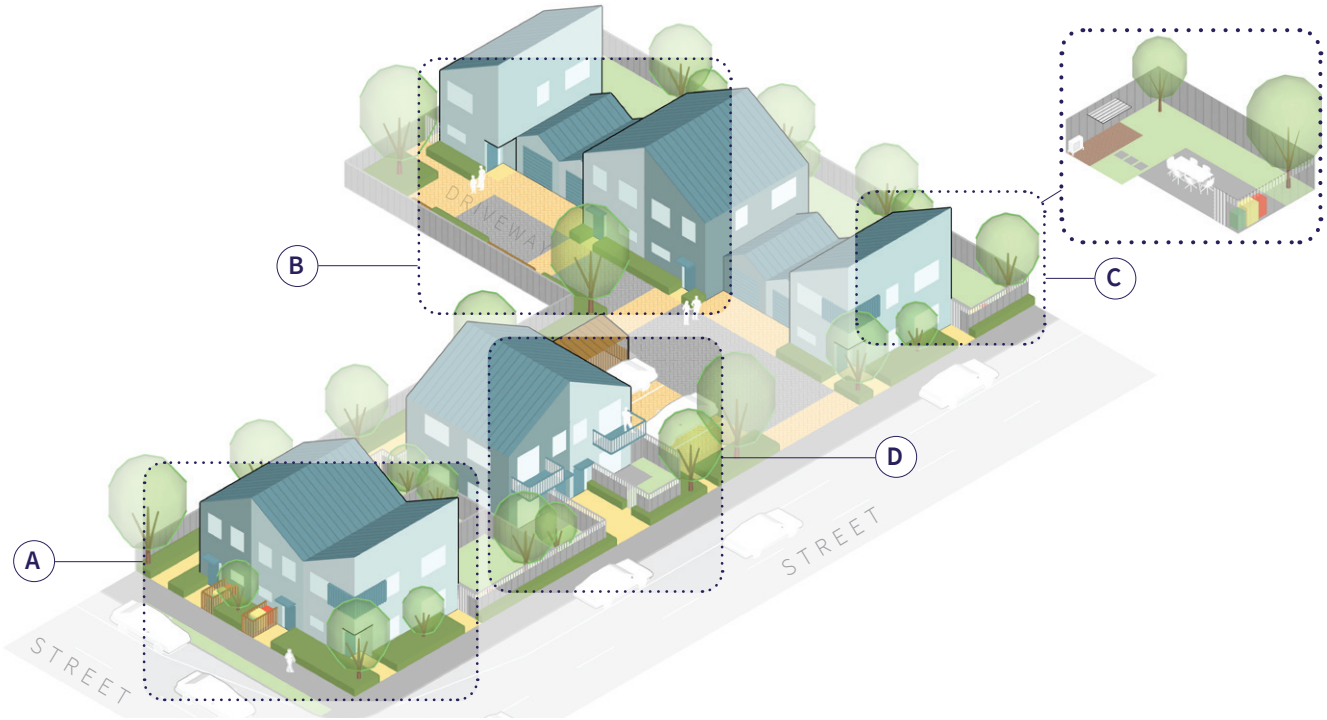
- the planted threshold between buildings and accessways are at least 1m for safety and privacy.

(C) **Private 'backs'** are prioritised to the rear or side of buildings so they are secure for residents and out of public view. It is ideal for:

- outdoor living space, and
- service elements (e.g. washing lines, utilities).

(D) **Where site orientation leads to some private OLS along public/semi-public frontages,** public and private space is still separate and achieves '**A**'. This includes:

- visible front doors/main entrances separated from private OLS using a boundary treatment (e.g. using wide-frontage units and pairing access paths for spaciousness and safety),
- balancing the street frontage (excluding driveways) in favour of planting and low (or no) fencing, and
- potential use of upper-level balconies on the frontage, in combination with the above, to provide engagement and passive surveillance.



Examples of good outcomes for the design goal

Common issues and improvements

Issue: Outdoor living spaces and large glazed sliding doors located between the unit and the street, resulting in:

- Lack of clarity as to where the main entrance to the unit is.
- Poor engagement and street scene due to tall fences along the public frontage.
- Minimal privacy for indoor and outdoor living spaces.
- Reduced security and lack of opportunity to filter unexpected visitors.

Improvement: Provide wider units which can incorporate engaging front doors and entrances next to, and separate from, indoor and outdoor living spaces to enable their visibility from the street.

Fully private outdoor living space with a solid gate. An upper portion of transparent fencing and planting balances the public and private interface.

Pairing the front doors creates a good proportion of open frontage and a wide, combined accessway for safety. The solid materiality of front doors also makes them easily recognisable as entrances.

Planting along footpaths and by front doors creates a welcoming and attractive entrance to homes.

RDP key: 1 *Site layout* 2 *Relationship to the street and public open spaces* 3 *Built form and appearance* 4 *Liveability and wellbeing* 5 *Integration of access, parking and servicing* 6 *Safety*

Key 14A.11.1/14.15.1 Residential Design Principle: ***5/g. Integration of access, parking and servicing***

Other relevant RDP: *1, 2/d., 4/f., 6/h.*

Related design goals: 1.3 Well-integrated surface parking; 1.4 Well-integrated garages; 1.5 Convenient and secure cycle storage; 1.6 Fit-for-purpose bin storage

1.2 Safe site access and movement

Integrating access for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians has an impact on site layout and the street interface. As the most vulnerable users, good developments ensure that **pedestrians have safe, clear and comfortable access into and through the site**. This includes consideration for the location and design of driveways and pedestrian paths to *"integrate access in a way that is safe for all users"*.

To improve site efficiency, shared accessways can be a good solution for smaller developments but need to be designed to ensure low traffic speeds and high awareness of potential people movement.

Design expectations:

(A) **Safe, clear and comfortable pedestrian routes** are:

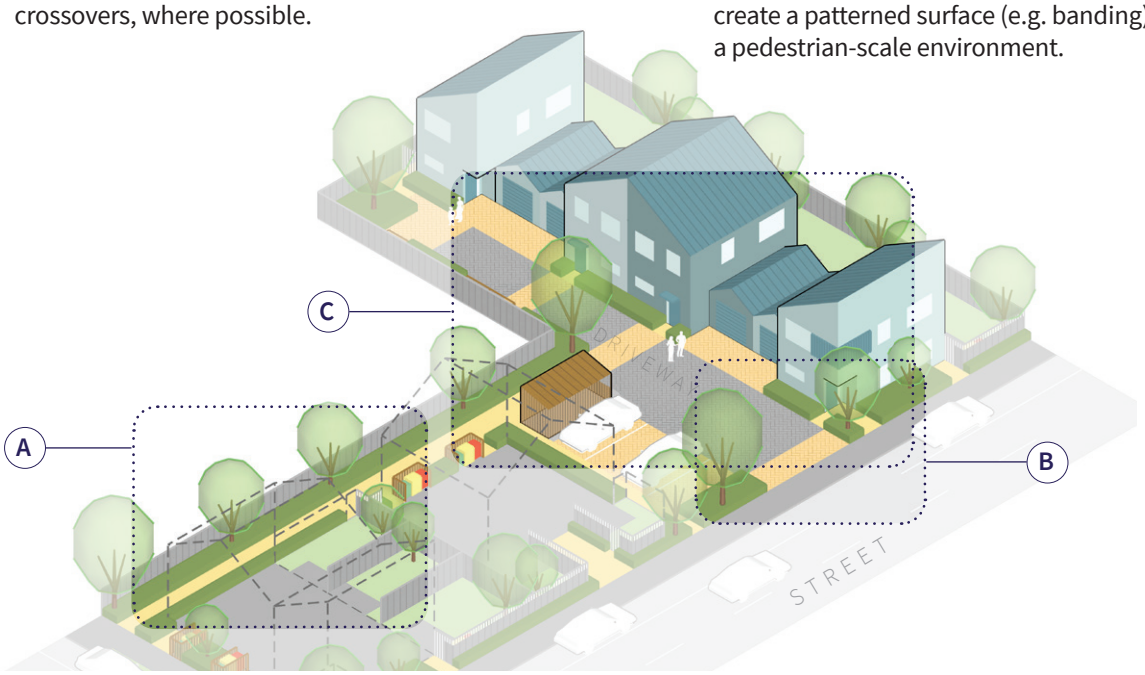
- legible and connected, with good sightlines,
- well overlooked by habitable rooms,
- separated from vehicle movement and car parks by a kerb and/or planting, and a different surface material,
- direct from the street to front doors/entrances (e.g. avoiding level changes, where possible), and
- consistently wide to enable two people to walk side-by-side or to pass, including those with cycles, strollers and wheelchairs:
  - with at least 1.5m dedicated footpath,
  - within a recommended 3m-wide gap between buildings (and/or boundaries) which includes threshold and amenity planting.

(B) **Effectively integrated vehicular access** results in lower vehicle speeds and is:

- softened with adjacent planting, and
- consolidated with neighbours to minimise crossovers, where possible.

(C) **Shared accessways** combine the movement of vehicles and pedestrians and can be an efficient and effective alternative use of space, instead of providing a separate, raised footpath (particularly for a smaller number of units or site size). However, they need to be well integrated and genuinely designed as 'shared space' for safety, without being dominated by car parking. This includes all of the following:

- creating a physical or visual threshold where the shared accessway begins/ends (e.g. by using a distinctive or tactile surface treatment),
- a level surface with no obstructions to pedestrian movement across the space,
- narrowing or deflecting the trafficable route by creating 'pinch points', or a chicane, with trees and/or shrub planting, street furniture, or limited parallel parking, to help slow traffic,
- separating front doors and buildings from the accessway by at least a 1m width of planting to provide a safety and privacy threshold, and
- a variety of high quality materials or unit pavers to create a patterned surface (e.g. banding) to prioritise a pedestrian-scale environment.



Examples of good outcomes for the design goal

Common issues and improvements

Issue: Ambiguous user priority and hard surface- and vehicle-dominated environment along the driveway due to:

- A lack of amenity and privacy from minimal separation between the accessway and the units.
- Narrow planting areas along the driveway which will not support substantial long-term planting.
- Confusion from the presence of both horizontal banding and the appearance of a delineated pedestrian route which may result in unpredictable behaviour impacting pedestrian safety.

Improvement: Create a well-integrated shared accessway to improve pedestrian safety and general amenity.

Material banding, planting, and a tree indicate the start of the shared space and reinforce a change in environment from the raod.

Horizontal banding is continued along the level access to indicate a shared space environment.

Dense shrub planting creates pinch points, to slow vehicles, and separation from the units to improve privacy.

RDP key: 1 Site layout | 2 Relationship to the street and public open spaces | 3 Built form and appearance | 4 Liveability and wellbeing | 5 Integration of access, parking and servicing | 6 Safety

Key 14A.11.1/14.15.1 Residential Design Principle: ***5/g. Integration of access, parking and servicing***

Other relevant RDP: *1, 2/d., 4/f., 6/h.*

Related design goals: 1.2 Safe site access and movement; 1.4 Well-integrated garages; 1.5 Convenient and secure cycle storage; 1.6 Fit-for-purpose bin storage

1.3 Well-integrated surface parking

On-site car parking needs to be well integrated so that the appearance of parked cars and parking areas do ***"not dominate the development".*** This includes locations away from the street and/or where they can be screened or softened by trees and planting to improve outlook for residents and neighbours.

Surface parking can be provided in communal areas or privately 'on-lot', directly adjacent to the unit (usually townhouses). Using a mix of parking types (including garages, refer 1.4) will help reduce vehicular dominance.

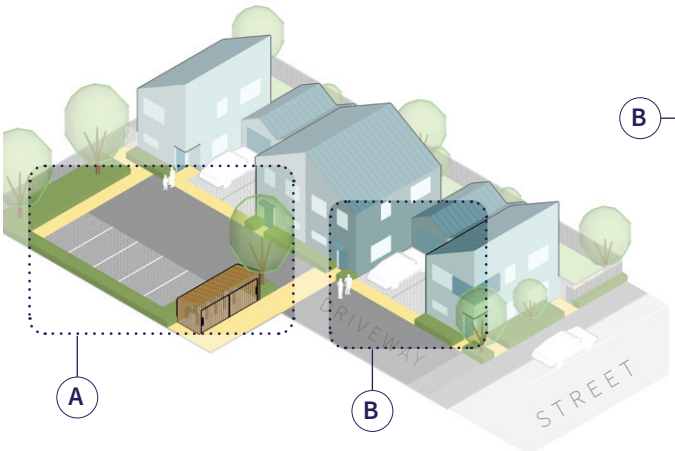
Design expectations:

A **Communal (or 'grouped') surface parking** can be an efficient use of space but needs to provide good amenity with or without cars being present. Small groupings can work well to balance appearance, opportunity for planting and convenient access. Well-integrated communal surface parking is:

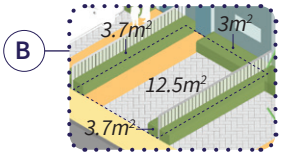
- softened by trees and shrub planting to achieve a good outlook for residents and break up parking, e.g. at least 1 tree for every 5 spaces,
- broken up using different surface treatments for large expanses and/or to define parking spaces, avoiding asphalt where possible to differentiate from the road carriageway,
- evenly lit without glare,
- overlooked by multiple habitable rooms (both ground and upper floor(s)) for safety, and
- able to accommodate vehicles and manoeuvring without potential to obstruct footpaths.

B **Private 'on-lot' parking** is highly convenient for residents. However, it needs to avoid dominating the development or the interface with the accessway or street. Well-integrated on-lot parking is:

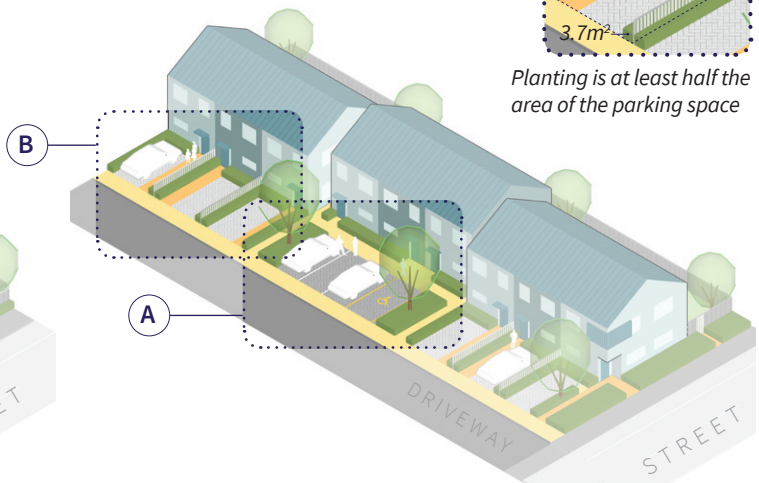
- secondary to the unit, e.g. less than half the frontage or located to the side of the unit,
- co-located with planting (at least half the area of the parking space where in front of the unit),
- single-width, however two spaces may be accommodated in tandem if at least one space is behind the main facade,
- no more than 5.5m deep for a single space and no less than 5m to avoid cars overhanging the footpath or berm,
- a different surface material to the adjacent footpath and/or accessway, and
- varied, to minimise long runs (e.g. more than six) of the same parking type and therefore reduce visual dominance of vehicles.



Communal surface parking used in combination with private on-lot in front of garages.



Planting is at least half the area of the parking space



Using small groupings of communal surface parking alongside private on-lot parking in front of townhouses provides variation within the street scene, and opportunity for larger trees.

Examples of good outcomes for the design goal

Common issues and improvements

Issue: Surface carpark dominates the development due to:

- A long line of cars without a visual break.
- Minimal trees and planting - the area along the boundary fence is not wide enough to support long-term growth.
- Wide expanse of asphalt dominating the appearance from the street, as well as outlook from homes.
- No passive surveillance from ground floor reducing the sense of ownership and safety.

Improvement: Integrate amenity to reduce the dominance of cars and improve the overall appearance of the development.

- Wide planting areas support long-term growth and amenity, including the ability to integrate bollard lighting.
- Space prioritised for trees and plants reduces the dominance of cars, improving overall amenity and appearance.
- A different surface treatment for parking spaces (including avoiding asphalt) mitigates the visual impact and dominance of the carpark.
- Ground floor windows increase safety and sense of ownership.

RDP key: 1 Site layout | 2 Relationship to the street and public open spaces | 3 Built form and appearance | 4 Liveability and wellbeing | 5 Integration of access, parking and servicing | 6 Safety

Key 14.15.1 Residential Design Principle: ***5/g. Integration of access, parking and servicing***

Other relevant RDP: *1, 2/d., 3/e., 4/f., 6/h.*

Related design goals: 1.2 Safe site access and movement; 1.3 Well-integrated surface parking; 1.5 Convenient and secure cycle storage; 1.6 Fit-for-purpose bin storage

1.4 Well-integrated garages

Well-integrated garages (and any covered parking, including carports) do *"not dominate the development".* This is achieved by locating them away from the street and/or making them secondary within building frontages so front doors, main entrances and ground floor windows are more prominent.

Using a mix of parking types (including communal areas, refer 1.3) helps reduce the visual dominance of parking.

Design expectations:

A **Individual garages** are primarily single-width and integrated into development by:

- being set back either for a limited distance from the main facade, to prevent unanticipated parking overhanging accessways, or for no more than a single-length parking space (e.g. 5.5m),
- occupying less than half the overall ground floor frontage, and
- considering how the design and materiality of garage doors can help them blend into the built form.

B **Individual or communal carports** can provide a sheltered alternative to surface parking. Safe and well-integrated carports are:

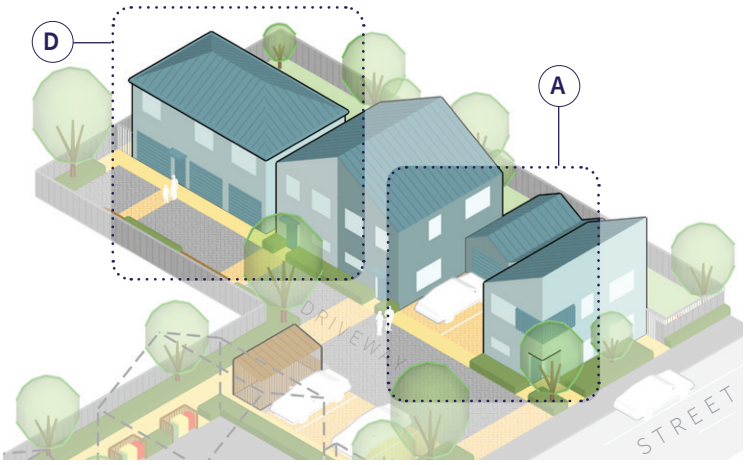
- open-sided to ensure good visibilty (e.g. not enclosed on more than two sides),
- designed with similar colours/materials to complement the associated buildings, and
- not obstructive to access or outlook.

C **Podium, semi-basement or basement parking** can free up the site and integrate larger volumes of parking (e.g. for apartments) effectively when it includes:

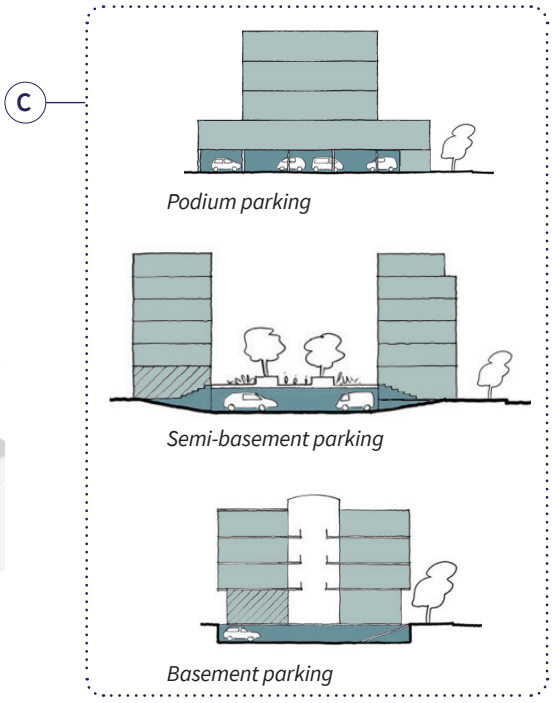
- an easily identifiable vehicle entrance which is less than a third of the ground floor frontage,
- activation on public-facing edges either by habitable spaces, openings, or at least a 1m-wide planted edge,
- a well-overlooked vehicle accessway, particularly where located away from the street, and
- secure and access-controlled entry, including a separate, secure pedestrian access.
- Avoid undercroft parking for safety reasons.

D **In limited scenarios, garages can be integrated under a single-storey unit as a 'mews house'**. They are only appropriate when:

- located behind other units with good street frontage,
- used sparingly, as part of a mix of housing types, and
- the blank frontage created by garage doors is balanced by windows to habitable rooms and a prominent entrance to the unit above.



Private garages are set back from the accessway by one car length and a mews house is located at the end of the accessway. The mews house's garage-door frontage is balanced by other units that positively address the shared accessway.



Examples of good outcomes for the design goal

Common issues and improvements

Issue: Garages dominate the overall appearance of the development and create a high proportion of blank wall at the ground level due to:

- Lack of windows facing directly onto the shared accessway.
- Narrow units, meaning garage doors are a higher proportion of the ground floor elevation and more prominent than entrances.
- No space for trees and planting.
- Wide expanse of asphalt, prioritising vehicles and manoeuvring.
- No engagement or passive surveillance from the ground floor, reducing sense of safety.

Improvement: Integrate front doors and habitable rooms at the ground floor to create a more engaging frontage.

- Planting, trees, and material banding supports a high quality pedestrian environment.
- Ground floor front doors and windows provide passive surveillance, improving safety and sense of ownership.
- Garage doors set back from the building frontage reduce vehicle dominance.

RDP key: 1 Site layout | 2 Relationship to the street and public open spaces | 3 Built form and appearance | 4 Liveability and wellbeing | 5 Integration of access, parking and servicing | 6 Safety

Key 14.15.1 Residential Design Principle: *5/g. Integration of access, parking and servicing*

Other relevant RDP: *1, 3/e., 4/f., 6/h.*

Related design goals: 1.2 Safe site access and movement; 1.3 Well-integrated surface parking; 1.4 Well-integrated garages; 1.6 Fit-for-purpose bin storage

Useful references: DP Appendix 7.5.2.e; *NZTA Waka Kotahi Cycle parking planning and design*

1.5 Convenient and secure cycle storage

Providing **functional cycle parking and storage facilities is key to facilitating cycling** and supporting active transport. For facilities to be confidently and consistently used, they must be ***"conveniently accessible, safe and/or secure",*** including adequate storage and manoeuvring dimensions for basic usability.

Residential cycle storage, for townhouses or apartments, can be provided individually per unit or shared communally between multiple units. Consider visitor parking for larger developments.

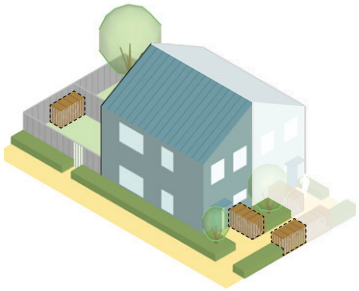
Design expectations

(A) **Convenient, secure and functional residential cycle storage** is:

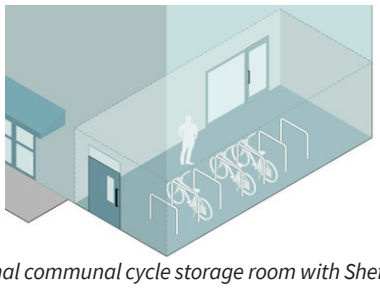
- within a lockable, weatherproof and robust enclosure, with reasonable manoeuvring/circulation space for access by a range of cycle types and users,
- easily accessible on the way to/from the relevant unit(s),
- located to avoid carrying the full weight of a cycle, including up steps or stairs, or being wheeled through the unit,
- well overlooked with a clear sense of ownership to the relevant unit/s, and
- not highly visible from the street (i.e. to not put cycles on show to invite theft).
- If cycle storage is to be accommodated in a garage, consider the space required to fit a car, cycle storage, and reasonable access to both.

(B) **In addition to 'A', communal residential cycle storage** (e.g. external shelters/internal storage rooms) includes:

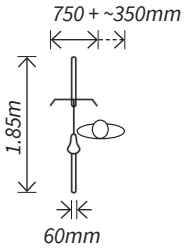
- stands that can support and secure a cycle frame for locking (e.g. Sheffield/staple style),
- reasonable space for access in/out of the storage area/shelter and between stands,
- at least three-quarters horizontal cycle stands,
- eyeline visibility in/out for passive surveillance (with view of cycles available at close range for residents),
- the ability to accommodate larger, non-standard cycles (e.g. cargo, trailers, etc),
- appropriate lighting, and
- secure access (pin-pad entry is not recommended due to ease of sharing and, therefore, theft).
- External shelters should complement development, with robust materials finished to a good quality.
  - Where external cycle shelters are co-located with external bin shelters, consider the combined effect of their appearance.



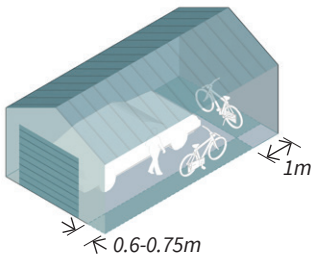
Potential options for private cycle storage include: within the front yard (by front door), along the accessway, or adjacent to outdoor living space



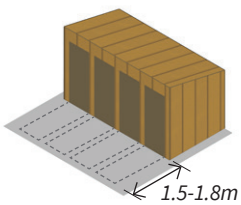
Internal communal cycle storage room with Sheffield-style stands



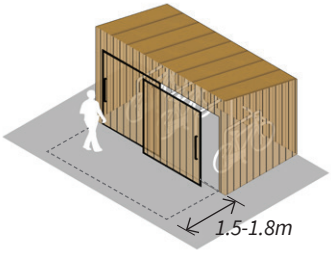
90%ile bicycle with indicative width of a person alongside



Single-width garage showing additional space recommended to store cycles (to the side or at the front)

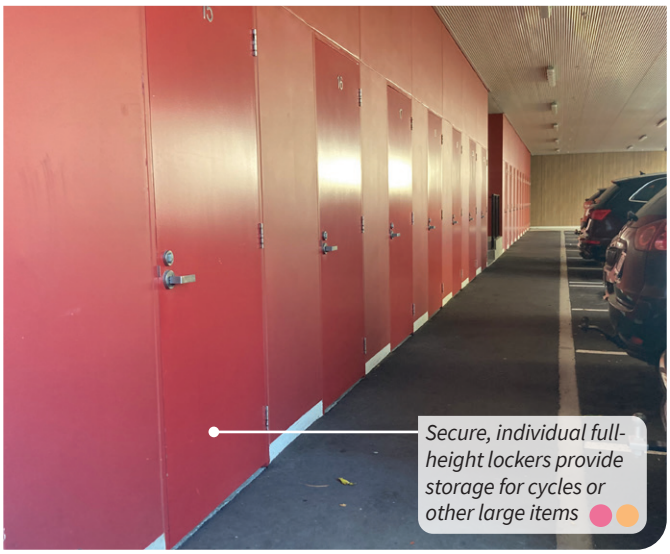


Individual, full-height external shelters/lockers (may be integrated as part of a building)



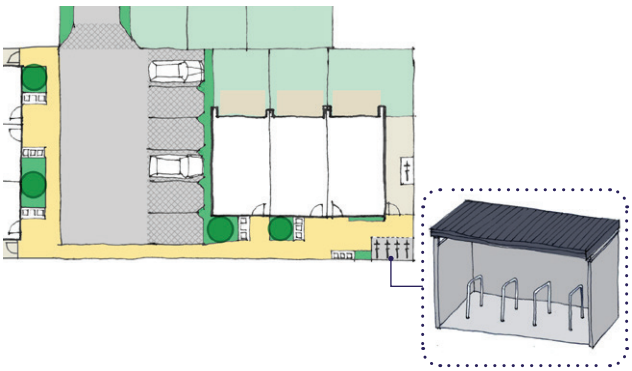
Communal external shelter - space to take cycles in/out can be provided outside doors to reduce the overall size of the shelter (consider hinge locations, space for door opening, etc)

Examples of good outcomes for the design goal



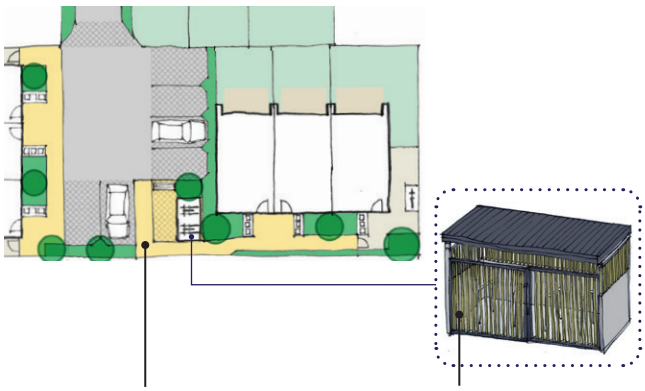
Common issues and improvements

Issue: Communal cycle shelter located at the rear corner of the site, resulting in:



- Lack of use due to poor location which impacts convenience of access and residents' ability to check on cycles and have peace of mind.
- Minimal overlooking and passive surveillance from units and lack of sense of ownership.
- Solid shelter with one open side is exposed to the elements yet prevents effective passive surveillance, reducing security and increasing likelihood of theft.

Improvement: Relocate the communal cycle storage into a central common area.



Locating the shelter within a centrally-located communal area, between street and units, ensures it is well overlooked by residents and more convenient to access.

A secure, enclosed shelter with semi-transparent sides protects and obscures cycles from long-range views, but allows close-range views by residents making it safer from theft and, therefore, more likely to be used.

RDP key: 1 Site layout | 2 Relationship to the street and public open spaces | 3 Built form and appearance | 4 Liveability and wellbeing | 5 Integration of access, parking and servicing | 6 Safety

Appendices

A. Design goals relationship to RDP

Residential Design Principles *(Note: numbers/names refer to 14A.11.1 set, letters refer to 14.15.1 set)*	1. Site layout	2/d. Relationship to the street and public open spaces	3/e. Built form and appearance	4/f. Liveability and wellbeing	5/g. Integration of access, parking and servicing	6/h. Safety
Design goals *(■ indicates the 'key' RDP for the design goal; ▪ indicates other relevant RDP for the design goal)*						
Chapter 1: Arranging the site						
Public 'fronts' and private 'backs'	▪	■	▪	▪	▪	▪
Safe site access and movement	▪	▪		▪	■	▪
Well-integrated surface parking	▪	▪		▪	■	▪
Well-integrated garages	▪	▪	▪	▪	■	▪
Convenient and secure cycle parking	▪		▪	▪	■	▪
Fit-for-purpose bin storage	▪		▪	▪	■	
Safe and pleasant external lighting	▪			▪	▪	■
Space for trees and planting	▪	▪		■	▪	
Communal outdoor living space	▪			■		▪
Chapter 2: Street to front door						
Engaging building frontages		■	▪	▪	▪	▪
Well-integrated level differences	▪	■	▪	▪	▪	
Appropriate boundary treatments		■	▪	▪		▪
Safe and comfortable apartment circulation				▪	▪	■
Chapter 3: The building(s)						
Managing form, bulk and height		▪	■			
Creating visual interest and human scale		▪	■	▪		
Functional internal layout and storage		▪		■	▪	▪
Balancing light, outlook and privacy		▪	▪	■		▪
Private outdoor living space	▪	▪	▪	■	▪	▪

(Italicised, grey design goals represent guidance yet to be developed or released as of October 2025 - titles tbc)

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