

May 2013

Submission to the Auckland Council Draft Unitary Plan by Parnell Heritage

Parnell Heritage Inc. was established in 2005 as a volunteer community group to respond to the increasing number of demolitions of heritage buildings and natural features of the suburb. The objective of the group is to preserve the rich heritage of Parnell which in 1841 became both Auckland and New Zealand's first suburb.

Parnell Heritage has earned community-wide recognition for our activities that promote the natural heritage, buildings people and events associated with Parnell. As part of this work, Parnell Heritage has published two annual Journals (with more planned) capturing the historical stories of its people and places.

Parnell Heritage supports and works with other community groups such as Parnell Inc, Parnell Trust and Parnell Community Centre and other heritage groups across the region. We have previously submitted our concerns with the Unitary Plan in August 2011.

We ask for changes & additions to the 2013 draft Unitary Plan as follows-

Within Parnell Residential zones 1 & 2 under Plan Change 163- proposed as Single House under the Draft Unitary Plan. Parnell Heritage is involved in the litigation over Plan Change 163 and supports the Draft Unitary Plan provisions which incorporate the recognition of character historic zones and buildings.

Demolition

- a) Parnell Heritage supports the proposal to assess demolition of properties built prior to 1944. Parnell Heritage wishes to be recognised as an interested party to receive material relating to any proposals to demolish or alter pre 1944 heritage properties -as defined or identified by Auckland Council

Notification

- a) Parnell Heritage requests Auckland Council to implement full notification processes when submissions are received for demolition, removal, and or alteration on any property pre 1944 in zones 1 and 2. This particularly applies when character streetscape is proposed to be disrupted. The character of the streetscape where existing heritage buildings must be considered in any approval of new buildings

Specific properties of merit

- a) Other architectural gems exist within Parnell often the work of émigré architects and these are outside of the 1944s provision and warrant protection. Two representative examples are 47 Gladstone Road and 3 Canterbury Place Parnell. Archival information from the Architectural Archives at the University of Auckland indicates 3 Canterbury Place is a notable example of a home designed by leading Auckland architect I. Porsolt in 1956. Parnell Heritage has other historical documents relating to post 1944 residences which warrant scheduling

Consultation

- a) Parnell Heritage wants clarification from Auckland Council around the processes related to how Council officers will consult the community at the design stage of applications of developments and how any subsequent objections will be dealt with
- b) We note from the Key Themes section of the Council's overview document 'higher density areas need good design' but can find no reference as to what processes will be used to define good design and which parties would be involved. The design rules need to be very clear to all parties. We note with concern that there is no reference to design controls on buildings in the mixed housing zone or 1-4 units in the terrace housing zone.
- c) Any activities/developments proposed for areas near (as in opposite, next door or within close proximity) to heritage buildings or sites need to be notified for neighbours and community organisations such as Parnell Heritage or Parnell Community Committee for input. Parnell Heritage supports the need for an impact assessment on heritage properties where buildings are proposed adjacent or opposite the heritage site/building.

View shafts

- a) Planning developments must preserve the treasured view shafts for Parnell residents, commuters and tourists that presently exist to the harbour from Auckland Domain & volcanic cones. We submit that these can be maintained by two to four storey building zones within a mixed housing profile.
- b) It is important that any maximum heights include elevator bulkheads and any roof top projections. These can be as high as 1-2 metres. Anything less than inclusion in maximum heights for these building components risks a proliferation of the current unsightly roof profiles (cf Hong Kong) poking up into view shafts and horizons.
- c) Parnell is a ridge and gully landscape. Any new four storey buildings must be part of a 'stepped down' profile from the slopes to the harbour and must fit the character of the surrounding streetscape. This ideal would protect Auckland from further piecemeal heights of buildings and developments that currently prevail.

Zoning under Unitary Plan for intensification of Parnell

- a) Parnell is a suburb with current housing provision for families, single households and social or HNZ properties. A good cross section has been created for the community and a sense of place established. We support the retention of the HNZ properties on Parnell Rise and Stanwell Street to maintain the diversity of residential provision. Parnell Heritage notes that landscape enhancement plantings are needed at the HNZ Parnell Rise site.
- b) The draft Unitary Plan, with large areas zoned for intensification presents a significant

risk of loss of diversity of housing type provision—as has occurred on Nelson Street in the CBD.

Parnell's non-residential built heritage

Town Centre rules

- a) We repeat our request that any new profiles of shops on the western side of Parnell Rd be maintained at a 2 storey height so that the village atmosphere and setting is retained. Related to this is the importance of keeping any new buildings on Scarborough Terrace, one street over on the eastern side of Parnell Road at a 2-4 storey height so they don't tower over the buildings on Parnell Road.
- b) Many of Parnell's commercial buildings are constructed of masonry that may not meet new earthquake strengthening regulations. Many house small businesses. Parnell Heritage recommends that Auckland Council establishes a resource centre of engineers and building experts that can be consulted by affected owners.
- c) Currently there is inadequate provision in the Unitary Plan for character recognition of commercial buildings. Parnell Heritage recommends that there be an individual audit of commercial buildings and a reclassification if required. Parnell Heritage seeks an improved approach to Parnell Town Centre than The Centre Plan which has been transferred from the Isthmus Plan. This Plan has the wrong key and misses out scheduled heritage buildings.
- d) The railway land at Cheshire St warrants an imaginative plan that protects Mainline Steam buildings and provides for a Parnell rail station stop and supports Parnell Community Centre's concept of a Parnell Precinct. Parnell Heritage has a dream of being allocated space at Mainline Steam where our archives can be displayed and digitised records accessed by the community and visitor and research continued.
- e) The historic industrial warehouses at lower St Georges Bay Road and The Strand are remnants of our work history and should be preserved through the Unitary Plan.
- f) The concept plan for the Foundation as included in the Isthmus Plan should be in the UNITARY Plan to show the intention for this historic site rather than just a mixed use zoning.
- g) Neligan House is a scheduled building on St Stephens Avenue Parnell NZHPT listing. It was built in 1908-10 as the new Bishopcourt homestead in the arts and craft style and designed by Bamford and Pierce who are widely recognised in the architectural community. The chimneys are distinctive and an important part of the building. Parnell Heritage appreciates that they could pose a risk in an earthquake but recommend that they be retained and a plan developed with the Anglican Church owners to strengthen these iconic landmarks.

Natural environment

- a) Waipapa Stream. Protection is essential with provision of enhancement by suitable native plantings. One of very few natural waterways left in Auckland, it is imperative to retain a source of fresh water in case of a major emergency in Auckland.
- b) The Parnell cliffs, which have been dated as 20 million years old, must have high level protection. Stabilisation advice and reports from Auckland Council to owners whose existing or proposed properties which might affect the cliffs in any way, is essential.
- c) Ayr St Reserve and Alberon Park should emphasise native plantings and together with Parnell Rose Gardens require a management plan. We support definition of these as ecological areas.
- d) Augustus Terrace Park and Steps need to be to be protected and recorded on Unitary Plan maps.

Although possibly outside the Unitary Plan, Parnell Heritage records that;

- e) We support the work done within Judges Bay being maintained and the guns currently at the Naval Base to be returned to Point Resolution.
- f) We support conservation and predator control work being funded appropriately and implemented by Council staff and volunteers in Auckland parks and reserves.

Mangroves

- a) We oppose the removal of mangroves based on the date of photographs. Circumstances vary in each case and an environmental assessment by a qualified expert needs to be completed before approval is permitted. The Unitary Plan requires a rule making mangrove and mangrove seedling non-complying where it does not meet a list of constrained permitted activities such as protecting boat launching ramps or high tide bird roosts.
- b) Mangroves provide valuable habitat for native species and are an essential part of managing the effects of climate change. The Royal Society advises planners to prepare for more than one metre sea level rise by the end of this century. Mangroves protect foreshores and properties from erosion and inundation.
- c) Mangroves will naturally expand with increasing heat and sedimentation. Their productivity will compensate for lost sea grass, salt marsh and plankton productivity.
- d) Increases in mangrove forest provide a beneficial uptake of atmospheric carbon as the plants store it in vegetation and sediments. This natural process does not need taxpayer subsidies.
- e) The National Coastal Policy Statement for the planning time frame for sea level rise and the need to plan for the effects on future generations needs to be consulted *before* changes to AC regulations permit the removal of mangroves.

Noise

- a) We view with concern the proposal to reduce allowed noise regulations. We believe that with any intensification, the healthy living of residents requires adequate protection from undue noise, whether from public sources e.g. roads, the port, or private sources. We recommend that this issue is given further consideration and current constraints are at least maintained.
- b) Any new or altered road should be subject to the relevant NZ standard –NZS 6806:2010 Acoustics-Road-traffic noise-New and Altered roads. That is, new and altered roads must be required to comply with the standard.
- c) A strategy within the UP should be for the implementation of progressive mitigation of road traffic noise to the NZ standard.

Appeal rights

- a) Parnell Heritage supports the retention of citizen rights to appeal decisions made in relation to the issue of resource consents.
- b) We submit that the appeal aspect must allow transparency around the decision processes of the Council and avoid the 'top down' actions that can cause so much concern in the community.
- c) We believe it is not in the best interests of Auckland to have unnecessary delays to planning or have decisions endlessly before the Courts. However, public involvement in planning and consent processes, within defined parameters, when local Councils make decisions is the only opportunity for communities to have a say. Shared 'ownership' and commitment to their own communities requires that the democracy of notified consent for affected citizens is the norm.
- d) The parameters can be defined but the goal of the redefinition to exclude appeals by affected parties must not be the driving goal. The community right to involvement through a notified resource consents process can't be lost.

Parnell Heritage thanks Auckland Council for the opportunity to submit to the draft Unitary Plan and wishes to speak to the submission should an opportunity be made available.

Mary Barry Chair, Parnell Heritage

On behalf of Parnell Heritage executive and organisation members