

Choice in Urban Housing

Overview

Upper Hutt has a total land area of nearly 54,000 hectares. Of this area, approximately 1700 hectares, or 3.1% of the land area of Upper Hutt, is zoned for residential purposes.

Over 36,000 of the city's 38,200 residents live within the urban core, an increase of about 1,500 on five years ago. Some 13,600 dwellings were occupied on Census Night 2006, an increase of over 900 houses in five years.

After twenty years of population stability and slowly growing housing numbers, the city now appears to be growing again.

Upper Hutt has 'Good Bones'

Upper Hutt has good building blocks for sustainable urban development.

The main urban area is located on the flat upper valley of the Hutt River. It is compact, being physically constrained by hills on all sides. The river defines the physical structure of the city, and is an integral part of the city's identity.

State Highway 2 provides the main road access to other parts of the Wellington Region. The Eastern Hutt Road, Moonshine Hill Road, Akatarawa Road and the Wellington – Wairarapa Railway provide alternative access routes to the wider region. Generally, it's very easy to get from where we live to where we want to go, either by road or public transport.

The networks of open spaces and community facilities complement housing development, and centres for shopping and work are close to hand.

A Brief History of Housing

From the late 19th Century to the 20th Century Upper Hutt's residential development expanded in phases along this transport corridor. Over the past 100 years most of the valley floor has gradually been urbanised.

Following the Second World War, Upper Hutt grew rapidly as new land was subdivided and commuter rail services enabled civil servants to buy their own homes. By the 1960s, Upper Hutt was one of the fastest growing districts in New Zealand, but by the 1980s population growth had slowed, partly in response to the decline of manufacturing activities in the Hutt Valley.

The opening of new primary schools effectively reflects the release of new land for housing development, as shown in the table below.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS OPENING IN UPPER HUTT

YEAR	PRIMARY SCHOOL
1864	First Upper Hutt school established
1910	St Josephs
1924	Silverstream
1929	Trentham
1953	Oxford Crescent
1954	Pinehaven
1955	Brentwood
1956	Fraser Crescent
1957	Te Marua
1961	St Brendans
1969	Maoribank
1973	Brown Owl
1977	Totara Park
1978	Birchville

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The city now offers a wide range of housing types, from expansive and more expensive housing through to compact and more affordable housing.

Older homes, including villas and bungalows are spread across the urban valley floor. There was a proliferation of company flats, and attached single and double storey 'sausage flats' in the 1950s and 1960s. Some two storey apartment buildings were also constructed, for example the Housing New Zealand developments at Brentwood and Bonnie Glen Crescent.

More recently, infill subdivision and cross-leases have spread throughout the urban area, as the larger sections on subdivisions from the 1950s and 1960s have been further developed. Retirement village complexes have been established, some growing from older care institutions and others being newly created.

An emerging feature is the development of more comprehensive residential developments, with small blocks of housing being developed in a more integrated way.

Upper Hutt is still a very affordable area within the Wellington metropolitan area to buy a home, with the average house price over the past year being approximately \$330,000. This is significantly less than in Wellington City. Given that much of our urban area is within 30 minutes drive of the Wellington Central Business District, this makes Upper Hutt a very attractive place for families and a good growth prospect for the future.

Residential Amenity

There are four main elements to the residential amenity of Upper Hutt.

These are:

- Predominantly detached houses on their own sections
- A low density of housing laid out in a suburban subdivision pattern
- A large number of trees [both native and exotic] with high amenity values
- Most residential development is on the valley floor with the surrounding hill sides generally being free of housing.

Overall, the amenity and identity of Upper Hutt is defined by its space, natural beauty and landforms - the river corridor, the hills and trees.



View towards Riverstone Terraces

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Special Character

The city also features suburbs and pockets of development with quite distinctive characteristics.

Housing Areas

The Residential Conservation Zone areas at Silverstream, Heretaunga, and in the vicinity of Palfrey Street, Cruickshank Road and Birch Terrace feature larger trees and larger lot sizes [800m² and more], creating areas of very high residential amenity.

More spacious housing has developed on the tree-clad hill areas of Mt Marua, Pinehaven, and the Blue Mountains. Many of these homes feature spectacular views across the valley and to the mountains.

Very large residential sections [of 2000m² and more], which are fully reticulated for urban services, are provided at Emerald Hill, parts of Mt Marua and the higher areas at Riverstone Terraces.

Some suburbs feature housing typical of an era because parts of the city were developed so quickly. For example, Poets Block features many wooden and brick houses from the 1950s. Elderslea features 1960s style housing and housing from the 1970s is found throughout Chatsworth Road, Totara Park and Timberlea.



Golders Cottage

Heritage

A number of local architects have left their legacy in Upper Hutt homes, including JW Chapman Taylor, J Craig and P Moller. Three of the four homes listed on the District Plan Schedule of Significant Heritage Features are Chapman Taylor designs, as shown in the table below.

DWELLINGS LISTED AS HERITAGE FEATURES

DISTRICT PLAN REFERENCE	DWELLING LOCATION
9	Tweed House 5 Brentwood St
10	Restormel 53 Chatsworth Rd
11	Woodhill 71 Chatsworth Rd
12	Golders Cottage 707 Fergusson Drive

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Trees

Trees also play a significant role in adding to the amenity of an area. Both the Residential Conservation and Hill zones include standards that protect larger trees. The District Plan also includes a Schedule of Notable Trees. Those in residential areas are listed in the following table.

Chatsworth Road



Entrance to Totara Park

NOTABLE TREES IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

DISTRICT PLAN REFERENCE	TREE LOCATION
1	Bunya Bunya Akatarawa Road [near Brown owl shops]
2	Totara 92 Barton Avenue
3	Totara California Drive roundabout
5	Pin Oak 803-805 Fergusson Drive
6	English Elm 803-805 Fergusson Drive
10	Atlantic Cedar 7 Johnswood Grove
14	Copper Beech 73 Martin Street
16	English Oak 2 Palmer Crescent
18	European Lime Racecourse Road [Summerset Village]
19	Blue Gum 27 Redwood Street
20	Totara 13 Rosina Street
23	Kahikatea 21 Tararua Street
24	European Beech 5 Tawai Street
26	European Beech 33 Whakatiki Street
28	Redwood 3 Wood Street
29	Kowhai 707 Fergusson Drive [Golders Cottage]

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Recent Growth in Housing

Over the past ten years, and especially over the past five years, there has been a rapid uptake of conventional suburban housing in subdivisions at Riverstone Terraces, Sylvan Heights, Sapphire Grove, Talbot Grove, and Louis Street. Within the past year Council has processed resource consents for the creation of an additional 250 residential lots at four locations - Riverstone Terraces, Kingsley Heights, Norana Road and the former Brentwood School site. There is clearly a continuing demand for conventional suburban housing.

More innovative housing options, though small in scale, also seem to be selling well and there is no clear sense of what the market could be like for alternative forms of housing, including for medium to high density housing in particular areas.

Forecasting Future Housing Demands

While predicting future housing growth may well be described as calculated guesswork, it is still important to consider what might realistically happen, given past trends and what we already know about future prospects. Forecasts are needed to plan effectively for the future, to ensure that when growth pressures occur, the city and Council are able to respond effectively.

The following growth forecasts have been made for housing development within the existing urban areas of Upper Hutt. In preparing the forecasts, staff have reviewed a range of information, including:

- Statistics NZ Census 2006 provisional census night data
- Statistics NZ sub-national household projections, including underlying assumptions about migration
- Building consent data for new dwellings
- Resource consents granted over the past 10 years for both infill and greenfield subdivisions
- Aerial photographs of Upper Hutt
- Recent economic data
- Recent discussions with developers operating within Upper Hutt

The table following summarises our best estimates of what may happen. Further detail can be found in the section '20 Year Forecast for New Dwellings' at the end of this document.

20 YEAR FORECAST FOR NEW URBAN DWELLINGS

AREA [excludes Possible Greenfield Areas]	Occupied Dwellings 2006 ¹	New Dwelling Consents 2001-2006 ²	Additional Dwellings In 20 Years ³
South/West	2778	90	345
West/Central	2928	200	335
Central	4158	87	410
North/East	3495	169	800
Riverstone	228	213	210
URBAN TOTAL	13587	759	2100

¹ Statistics NZ Occupied Households on Census Night 2006

² Upper Hutt City Council Building Consent Statistics 2001-2006

³ Upper Hutt City Council City Planning Division Forecast 2006

While this forecast is based on the proposals in the Urban Growth Strategy, it does not yet include forecasts for possible new greenfield housing areas.

Demand for Residential Land

Upper Hutt does not have significant latent capacity for residential growth under the existing zoning and District Plan provisions.

The choice of greenfield sites zoned for residential development may be limited as soon as five years from now. Many of the straightforward sites to infill have now been developed, some developers are now moving houses in order to subdivide and there is a finite limit to continuing infill.

It is now essential to identify new areas for residential growth.