



Memorandum

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Attention: Emily Thomson

Company: Upper Hutt City Council

Date: 31 January 2023

From: Jos Coolen, Urban Designer | Associate Principal

Message Ref: Review Outdoor Living Space requirements in centres zones

Project No: BM200521 – Upper Hutt Intensification Evaluation

Introduction

Boffa Miskell was commissioned by Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) to advice on a recurring series of requested amendments by Kāinga Ora to the UHCC IPI with regards to private outdoor space provisions for residential units within all centres zones.

Current proposed

The IPI provisions, notified by UHCC in July 2022, proposed the following standards for the centre zones Neighbourhood Centre Zone (NCZ), Local Centre Zones (LCZ) and Town Centre Zones (TCZ).

1. Each residential unit at ground floor level must have an outdoor living space that is at least **20 square metres** and that comprises ground floor, balcony, patio, or roof terrace space that,
 - a. where located at ground level, has no dimension less than **3 metres**; and
 - b. where provided in the form of a balcony, patio, or roof terrace, is at least **8 square metres** and has a minimum dimension of **1.8 metres**; and
 - c. is accessible from the residential unit; and
 - d. may be
 - i. grouped cumulatively by area in 1 communally accessible location; or
 - ii. located directly adjacent to the unit; and
 - e. is free of buildings, parking spaces, and servicing and manoeuvring areas.
2. Each residential unit located above ground floor level must have an outdoor living space in the form of a balcony, patio, or roof terrace that
 - a. is at least **8 square metres** and has a minimum dimension of **1.8 metres**; and
 - b. is accessible from the residential unit; and
 - c. may be
 - i. grouped cumulatively by area in 1 communally accessible location, in which case it may be located at ground level; or
 - ii. located directly adjacent to the unit.
3. For multi-unit housing, the outdoor living space can be provided as private space and shared space where:
 - a. Each residential unit is provided with a private outdoor living space that has a minimum area of **8m²** with a minimum dimension of **1.8m**, that is directly accessible from the residential unit to which it relates;
 - b. The shared outdoor living space has a minimum area of **20m²** with a minimum dimension of **3m**; and
 - c. Any ground floor outdoor living space is free of buildings, parking spaces and manoeuvring areas.

Suggested by Kāinga Ora

As provided by UHCC:

1. Delete the existing wording for outdoor living space.

2. Replace with the following wording:

- (a) Each residential unit, including any dual key unit, must be provided with either a private outdoor living space or access to a communal outdoor living space;
- (b) Where private outdoor living space is provided it must be:
- i. For the exclusive use of residents;
 - ii. Directly accessible from a habitable room;
 - iii. A single contiguous space; and
 - iv. Of the minimum area and dimension specified in the table below;
- (c) Where communal outdoor living space is provided it does not need to be in a single continuous space, but it must be:
- i. Accessible from the residential units it serves;
 - ii. Of the minimum area and dimension specified in the table below; and
 - iii. Free of buildings, parking spaces, and servicing and manoeuvring areas.

<u>Living Space Type</u>	<u>Minimum area</u>	<u>Minimum dimension</u>
<u>1. Private</u>		
i <u>Studio unit & 1 bedroom unit</u>	<u>5m²</u>	<u>1.8m</u>
ii <u>2+ bedroom unit</u>	<u>8m²</u>	<u>1.8m²</u>
<u>2. Communal</u>		
<u>For every 5 units</u>	<u>10m²</u>	<u>8m</u>

Urban Design commentary

General

Access to the outdoors contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents. This is particularly important in urban areas or centre zones where there generally is less immediate access to green spaces or the natural environment. In centre zones there is generally less space available for new public open space while the residential density is expected to grow in the future. Therefore it is essential to provide outdoor living spaces as part of residential developments to complement public open spaces and achieve good health and wellbeing outcomes for the community.

Not only direct access to outdoor spaces, but also the perception of being close to an accessible outdoor space (e.g. by having direct views of it from a habitable space) contributes to overall health and wellbeing. Additionally, a private outdoor living space also provides a buffer space for residents between private indoor spaces and public (or semi-public) outdoor spaces that contribute to the sense of privacy by enabling views outwards and reducing the possibility of views from the outside in.

Finally, balconies have the potential to contribute to weather protection as well as a sustainable indoor climate by functioning as eaves to the unit below – depending on the units' aspect it allows direct sunlight access in the winter when the sun is generally lower to the horizon and blocks direct sunlight access in the summer when the sun is higher in the sky.

Review of suggestions

I consider suggestions 2a, 2b and 2c to be acceptable and valuable additions to the District Plan provisions. Due to its benefits to health and wellbeing of the residents it is encouraged to provide outdoor living spaces, private or communal, that are directly accessible from habitable rooms. Direct access to communal spaces also enhance the sense of ownership that people perceive over the communal space, which generally results in better custodianship and levels of maintenance.

A continuous space of a useful shape and dimension, enables the opportunity to sit outside and have sufficient space for outdoor furniture.

A studio or 1 bedroom unit is generally occupied by a single or two-person household and therefore providing the opportunity for two people to sit outside should be encouraged. An outdoor living space of 5m² with a minimum dimension of 1.8m is an acceptable size for a studio and one bedroom unit. However, for the purpose of spending time in this space it is suggested that this dimension should be considered as an absolute minimum and any width less than 1.8m would compromise the comfort and reduce the benefits that generally are desired when spending time in this space.

For a two bedroom unit I consider the suggested 8m² with a minimum dimension of 1.8m to be acceptable. Similarly as the one bedroom unit requirements, 1.8m should be considered an absolute minimum. It would comfortably allow for four chairs to be placed in a row or, when deeper than 1.8m, provide sufficient space for chairs to be placed opposite each other with a small table in between.

The suggested provisions make no differentiation between two bedroom units or units with more than two bedrooms. I consider the suggested minimum area requirement of 8m² to be sufficient as an absolute minimum. I encourage a higher minimum dimension of at least 2.4m to result in a space that is large enough for residents to sit at a small table arrangement with four to six seats. However, if the same outdoor living space requirements for two or more bedroom units are being followed it is acceptable to rely on a developer's response, when developing three or more bedroom units in a centre zone, to provide for an outdoor living space that is of a suitable size relative to the size and layout of the unit.

It is noted that the suggested provisions do not include separate provisions for residential units at the ground floor.

In the UHCC IPI provisions, residential units are allowed at the ground floor:

- In the Neighbourhood Centre Zone (NCZ-P2) if they are located to the rear of a commercial activity. In this case the unit can not front onto a public open space (including road) or interrupt or prevent an active frontage (NCZ-S5).
- In the Local Centre Zone (LCZ-P2) and Town Centre Zone (TCZ-P2) if not along an active frontage, provided it does not interrupt or preclude an attractive and active frontage.
- The City Centre Zone (CCZ) does not provide for residential units at the ground floor.

Residential activity at ground level in a centre zone is generally discouraged and should be avoided in places where it has the potential to compromise the purpose of the zone. The provisions as currently proposed in the IPI support this. I consider it acceptable to use the same minimum outdoor living requirements for units at ground level as units above ground level. In practice, ground floor outdoor living spaces will likely use (close to) the full width of the unit. Considering the main purpose of the centre zone is to serve the needs of neighbouring suburbs and to provide commercial and community activities it is appropriate that less ground floor area is used for residential private outdoor living space compared to residential zones.

I consider the suggested provisions for communal outdoor space, as alternative to private outdoor living space to be acceptable, assuming that the minimum area per 5 units is 10m² **per unit**, and that the space is easily accessible by all units that do not have individual private outdoor living space.

Comparison with other cities for reference

Minimum private outdoor living space requirement (above ground floor)

		Studio		1 bedroom		2 bedroom2		3 bedrooms +	
		Min area	Min dimension	Min area	Min dimension	Min area	Min dimension	Min area	Min dimension
Wellington	Proposed District Plan – City Centre Zone	5m ²	1.8m	5m ²	1.8m	8m ²	1.8m	8m ²	1.8m
Auckland	PC78 – City Centre Zone	0 (minimum dwelling size can be reduced by 5m ² if outdoor living space is provided of greater than 5 m ²)	1.2m	0 (minimum dwelling size can be reduced by 8m ² if outdoor living space is provided of greater than 8 m ²)	1.8m	0 (minimum dwelling size can be reduced by 8m ² if outdoor living space is provided of greater than 8 m ²)	1.8m	0 (minimum dwelling size can be reduced by 8m ² if outdoor living space is provided of greater than 8 m ²)	1.8m
Hutt City	PC56 – Petone Commercial Zone	5m ²	1.8m	5m ²	1.8m	5m ²	1.8m	5m ²	1.8m
Porirua	Proposed District Plan variation 1 – Local Centre Zone, Neighbourhood Centre Zone (no requirements in Metro Centre Zone)	8m ²	1.8m	8m ²	1.8m	8m ²	1.8m	8m ²	1.8m
		40% of units can have Juliet balcony instead of balcony, terrace etc							
New South Wales (AUS)	Apartment Design Guide	4m ²	-	10m ²	2m	10m ²	2m	12m ²	4m
Victoria (AUS)	Apartment Design Guidelines	8m ²	1.8m	8m ²	1.8m	8m ²	2m	12m ²	2.4m

Minimum communal outdoor living space requirement

			Min area	Min dimension
Wellington Centre Zone	Proposed District Plan	For every 5 units	10m ² per unit	8m
Auckland Centre Zone	PC78 – City Centre Zone	none		
Hutt City	PC56 – Petone Commercial Activity Area	No requirements for upper level units		
Porirua	Proposed District Plan variation 1 – Local Centre Zone, Neighbourhood Centre Zone (no requirements in Metro Centre Zone)	Can be grouped cumulatively (incl 1 accessible location)		