

# ARCHITECTS DESIGN STATEMENT.

## INTRODUCTION

Novak + Middleton Architects are pleased to join with Dwell Housing's team to provide a new Social Housing Design for their newly acquired sites at 49 Coutts St + 36 Mahora Street, Kilbirnie, Wellington. The proposed development will include 19 Social Housing apartments, and 1 commercial space which may become the office for the Dwell Housing Trust.

This is a comprehensive proposal for the site which will replace all existing buildings with new buildings and associated landscaping and community facilities.

The project represents the very latest thinking in Social Housing. The finished development is intended as an exemplar of Social Housing design, and management, demonstrating best practice.

Dwell Housing Trust and Novak + Middleton and the associated team for this project, have considerable experience in the provision of Social Housing. The team have worked together previously to create the very successful Dwell Social Housing development at 31 Mahora Street in Kilbirnie. This new development will follow the exemplar precedent set at 31 Mahora Street and will be an excellent residential housing development that will provide much needed modern Social Housing in Wellington.

## THE SITE

Dwell Housing presently owns the sites at 49 Coutts St + 36 Mahora St, Kilbirnie. The Coutts St site is currently unoccupied and consists of several severely dilapidated buildings which had previously served as a bakery. The residential building on the Mahora St site is in a similarly dilapidated state. Due to the poor condition of the existing buildings, it is considered that there is no viable use or ability to adapt/upgrade these going forward. It is therefore proposed that these buildings be demolished, and the sites cleared in preparation for the new design as outlined in this application.

The site will continue to provide a commercial space fronting Coutts Street which will reflect the character and scale of the adjoining commercial streetscape. The majority of the site however will be used to provide housing for people in need. The proposed housing will provide; high quality, warm, healthy, affordable homes, where people flourish.

This is an excellent site for the provision of Social Housing. Some of its key attributes are

- **CONNECTIONS and PUBLIC TRANSPORT.** The site is only a minutes' walk from the nearest bus stop which provides regular access to central Wellington with many stops along the way. It is also located within easy walking distance of the Kilbirnie transport hub.
- **CHOICE and SURROUNDING FACILITIES.** The Kilbirnie shopping centre is located within a two minute walk of the site providing a comprehensive range of support services, including

medical centre, shops, recreational activities, library, swimming pool etc. There are two large supermarkets are located within close proximity.

- **ACCESSIBILITY.** The site is flat and suits development and intensification.
- **ENVIRONMENT.** The site receives excellent all day sunshine and is located adjacent to a large open area to the South-East which features a large established pohutukawa tree.

## THE PROPOSAL

Proposed is a mix of apartment types and commercial space. There is one commercial space and nineteen residential units in total, in four separate buildings. Eight of the residential units are one bedroom or studio units; nine units have two bedrooms; and two units contain three bedrooms. The commercial space is located adjacent to Coutts Street and has been designed to be used as an office for the Dwell Housing trust but could also be configured as two independent retail spaces.

The buildings are two-three storeys in height and the apartments within are either single level or two levels.

The site contains a vehicle loading area, several communal landscaped areas (one with seating), bicycle parking, and an enclosed rubbish area. The entire site will be fenced and fully landscaped. Access control will be provided at both entrances.

This is an exciting opportunity to have social housing as well as the Dwell Housing Trust's office on the site. This will ensure that resident's requirements are well supported.

The design includes the seven essential design qualities of the Urban Design protocol; context, character, choice, connections, creativity, custodianship, and collaboration. These are discussed throughout this proposal

Some of the key attributes and innovations that are included in to this project are as follows;

- **ADAPTABILITY/FLEXIBILITY.** The apartments have been configured so that the one bedroom units can also be configured as bedsits (studio) units or, in the case of two of the ground floor units, as accessible. The commercial space has been designed as offices for Dwell Housing Trust, however can be converted into two independent retail spaces. These changes are all efficient and economical to make involving no amendments to the structure, or the exterior of the building. These changes can be made before the building is constructed or at any time afterwards.
- **HEALTHY.** This development will provide, warm, dry, safe and healthy housing that is well suited to modern living. All housing units face north, east or west so as to achieve ample sunshine. The apartments are all double glazed, have insulation in excess of code requirement, are provided with passive trickle ventilation and have heating.
- **CPTED and SAFETY.** Crime prevention through environmental design. Novak + Middleton have considerable experience in this area. All units will have access control. There is excellent passive observation of all spaces and entrapment areas will be mitigated.

Having a small development of apartments ensures that residents are living in small communities where they can get to know their neighbours.

- **RESILIENCE.** Smaller repeating buildings offer many advantages over larger building. In the event of an earthquake they perform better. In a localised fire it is likely only one building would be affected. If maintenance is required only one building of the three is involved at any one time. If there is a disruptive tenant it is also only one building that is affected.
- **MODERN LIVING.** The apartments provide a comfortable living environment. Each apartment has a sunny living area with an open plan dining and kitchen area. There is a deck located of the principal living area on all upper floor units and a private outdoor courtyard at ground level. Bathrooms include a shower, there are laundry facilities, and ample storage is provided. The apartments have access control, Cat 6 cabling and MATV.
- **STRUCTURE.** The apartment's walls are all timber framed. The ground floor is a concrete slab on grade; upper floors are timber framed. The roof is long run metal with timber rafters.
- **DURABILITY.** Only well proven and durable materials have been chosen. These include painted fibre cement weatherboards, powder coated profiled metal long run roofing, Aluminium double glazed windows, painted fibre cement flat sheeting and Saligna timbers. Materials have been chosen for their robustness, low cost in life, and their performance and aesthetic.
- **MODULAR DESIGN.** The proposal is a modular design that includes repeating plans. There are several base plans, Kitchens, bathrooms and storage units are all similar. Within this repeating design there are site specific and individual differences which ensure that this will have a vibrant and appealing aesthetic that does not distinguish it from private housing.
- **MODULAR CONSTRUCTION.** Many of the parts of the buildings will be designed as components so that they can be manufactured off site. This greatly speeds up the construction process, improves quality, bring health and safety benefits and lowers the building costs. This will include premade kitchens, preframed timber exterior walls, possibly with their windows and cladding already installed, internal preframed partitions and staircases.
- **ECONOMICS.** The combination of modular design and construction and the simplicity of the design with a lot of repetition will considerably reduce the construction duration and consequently the cost. It is possible this development could be completed in 12 months from commencement of construction. Further programming work in conjunction with the proposed contractor, will be undertaken in the future to determine the construction timeframe.
- **EFFICIENCY and SIMPLICITY.** The simple design inherently improves the project economics, the ease of maintenance, life cycle costs, the adaptability, and ultimately the liveability of the apartments.
- **WEATHERTIGHTNESS.** It is essential for the longevity of the building and for healthy living that the buildings maintain their weathertightness for the full design life of the building. Simple well proven detailing and materials will be used. All roofs will have ample roof pitches that

fall to external gutters. Painted fibre cement weatherboard walls with a drained cavity and RAB board are well proven for their performance.

- CUSTODIANSHIP and APPROPRIATENESS. It is important that the Social Housing units are fit for purpose, meet client and tenant expectation and first and foremost provide a good standard of living for residents. Tenants should enjoy their homes, feel safe and have a comfortable healthy environment.
- URBAN DESIGN and CONTEXT. This we would like to think will be an award winning development. Our ambition is to create an exemplar of Social Housing Design. The scale and aesthetic of the buildings will blend comfortably in to the surrounding environment and considerably benefit the local communities. The contemporary design we believe will be a good fit with the existing character of the area which is largely represented by colonial shops and villas, complimented by an eclectic mix 1930s bungalows and more contemporary concrete block buildings. The location is excellent with a strong community demand for this type of specialist housing, and appropriate infrastructure and public transport adjoining the site already in place.
- ARCHITECTURE, CHARACTER and CREATIVITY. The design is contemporary and has a modern aesthetic. This is underpinned with a strong residential and non-institutional feel. This will have a sense of appropriateness for many of the residents and will ensure the housing fits comfortably in to its surrounding neighbourhood and environment. The intent is for the development to not look like 'Social Housing', but rather look like good private sector housing. The painted fibre cement weatherboards, metal cladding and metal roofs are the building materials that are typically seen in the houses of this neighbourhood. Colour will be used to add interest and to differentiate the apartments.
- SUSTAINABILITY. The project will demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental performance. The units will have a passive solar design; this will reduce the building energy foot print, using double glazing and high levels of insulation to reduce the needs for heating. Recycling and Compost options will be available for residents use.
- ACCESSIBILITY/PARKING. Excellent flat access is provided to all entrances and two ground floor apartments are able to be configured as accessible units. The resident demand for parking in this type of housing is very low, tenants typically don't own cars therefore no carparks are provided. The loading area utilises an existing kerb crossing and provides good servicing to both residential and commercial spaces. There is a bike park provided.
- LANDSCAPING. The entire site will receive landscaping. Ground floor apartments will all have their own individual private courtyard gardens and there is a community shared landscaping area with seating which adjoins the landscaped loading area. This will be an important communal area for residents to come together.

## THE TEAM

Dwell Housing have assembled a team of the very best and experienced consultants to deliver this exciting project. The team all has extensive Social Housing experience and has worked successfully together on many similar projects. The team is as follows;

- CLIENT. Dwell Housing Trust.

- LEAD CONSULTANT / ARCHITECT. Novak + Middleton.
- BUILD CONTRACTOR. Wilson Building
- STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. Clendon Burns and Park.
- SERVICES ENGINEERS. Spencer Holmes
- FIRE ENGINEERING. Spencer Holmes
- ACOUSTICS. Acousafe.
- PLANNING. Spencer Holmes

## CONCLUSION

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to work with the Dwell Housing Trust in assisting them in preparing this exciting proposal.

This is an important Wellington project that we believe requires an exemplary outcome. We have assembled the best possible team who have considerable expertise in all areas of Social Housing.

We believe as a team we have an outstanding Social Housing design that will be located on a very suitable site. It will meet the requirements of residents very appropriately and will provide much needed housing for those in our community that are most in need.

The design demonstrates the latest thinking in modern sustainable Social Housing which we anticipate will also set the benchmark for future Social Housing.

Yours faithfully

**Novak+Middleton Limited**



**Simon Novak**