

How does the Panel operate?

1. An applicant may apply at any WDC Customer Service centre.
2. The applicant will receive a confirmed Panel date.
3. At the Panel meeting, the applicant will make a 15-minute presentation on the way the project will improve or affect the built environment.
4. The Panel will deliberate on the project.
5. A report on the recommendations will be sent to the applicant within a week.
6. Panel meetings are considered confidential unless this privilege is waived by the applicant.
7. Applicants can apply for a further review after receiving the Panel's recommendation.



To apply:

Complete an application form and provide five copies of the following:

- coloured ground level photos showing adjoining properties within a 75 metre radius
- coloured elevations showing proposed signs, materials, colours, and textures
- a coloured aerial photo showing the site along with photos of the surrounding area
- site plan and analysis showing pedestrian and vehicle circulation
- floor plans
- sections showing the relationship to adjacent properties
- zoning map showing the site (from the District Plan)
- a brief Urban Design Statement on the way the project will contribute to/affect the urban environment
- a perspective drawing showing the neighbourhood context.

Contact details

- for more information, please refer to Council's website at www.wdc.govt.nz
- if you are unable to provide any requested items, please contact Jan Lucas at 430 4230 ext 8723 or janl@wdc.govt.nz.
- for other enquiries, write to: Urban Design Panel, Policy and Monitoring Department, Whangarei District Council, Walton Plaza, Private Bag 9023, Whangarei 0148



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Urban Design Panel

Making great places to shape our future



Good urban design for Whangarei

Whangarei District Council has signed the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, and has established the Urban Design Panel to help promote good urban design in the district.

Urban design makes places better by designing buildings, spaces, and networks in ways that enhance the function, feel and form of towns and cities.

This is important to Whangarei. The city and District play an important role as a meeting place in the Pacific. It is a gateway to Northland and close to Auckland. It is a vital commercial and industrial hub for the region.

Good urban design can improve Whangarei's position as an important hub by generating a strong feeling of identity, pride and security and making more efficient use of its resources.

Our District is set in an environment of picturesque Pacific beaches, rolling pasture and thick native forests. Whangarei's rustic villages and vibrant city centre complete the District's unique rural-urban setting.

To make the most of this unique cluster of characteristics, Whangarei must retain a high quality built environment that matches its natural beauty and as it grows, encourages more people to live, work, study, and visit the District.

What is the Urban Design Panel?

A panel of experienced and qualified professionals has been set up to provide free urban design advice and recommendations to individuals, developers, and Council at the earliest stage of a development.

The Panel includes an urban design/architect/property development/planning professional, a landscape architect, a consents planner/landscape architect, an environmental/urban/policy planner, and a building consents professional. Council allocates a maximum of two hours weekly to assess a maximum of two projects.

Will it delay projects?

The Panel will help applicants improve the design and viability of their projects and increase the robustness of their consent application.

The Panel will not delay projects nor create additional difficulties to applicants.

The earlier in the design process that a proposal goes to the Panel, the earlier and greater the benefits will be for the applicant.

The Panel's Report will carry the same weight as any other technical report.



What will the Panel consider?

The Panel may look at the following issues:

Effects on:

- pedestrian and vehicle movements
- visual appeal
- character
- listed heritage buildings and sites.

Context:

- relationship of the project and ground floor activities to public spaces, other buildings, and the heritage/cultural identity of an area
- how elements fit into the existing environment
- how the proposal will improve the existing environment.

Design elements:

- building size
- design creativity
- street appeal
- rooftop design
- pedestrian, vehicle, and service flows
- visual representation if project is on a site of significance to tangata whenua
- integration of art works into the development
- sustainable design within the building and in relation to the entire development.

Public perception:

- safety for users and passers by
- the way people will use public buildings/spaces
- public amenity and quality of outdoor spaces.

What projects may go to the Panel?

Projects that have significant urban design implications will benefit from assessment by the Panel.

Scale:

- residential/Commercial developments of 4 units or more
- planned unit developments of more than 20 units
- subdivision projects with more than 50 lots
- buildings with min. gross floor area of 1500 m².

Public nature:

- streetscape/beautification/public art projects
- community facilities
- major transportation and civic works projects.

Activity:

- hospitals
- retirement villages
- rest homes of 4 units or more
- civic buildings
- design competitions
- mixed-use developments.

Location:

- close to points of interest key to District identity
- on land with a distinct history or amenity
- within the CBD and suburban/local centres
- with covenants
- close to protected buildings, places, or objects
- close to any conservation or public open space.