

Character & heritage

The special character of Hamilton's natural and built environments, and the manner in which it values and expresses its cultural heritage ultimately define the city's quality and unique identity.

Special character areas include:

- > Natural environments – the Waikato river, Hamilton Gardens, Lake Waiwhakareke and Lake Rotoroa
- > Archaeological sites – remains of early European settlements, military redoubts and industrial artefacts
- > Cultural sites of Maori significance – former pa (defended sites), papakainga (settlements), mahinga kai (food resources) and ceremonial ritual.

Special character areas

Special character areas are neighbourhoods in the city that have distinctive and consistent qualities that set them apart as being unique.

Character is a combination of both the built and natural environment and can include a mix of land uses, building types and ages, site layout, street patterns, topography and vegetation.

Claudelands, Hamilton East and Templeview are recognised as special character areas in the District Plan and specific provisions apply to these neighbourhoods to maintain and enhance their character. Similarly, character areas relating to natural landscape features are already identified in the Rotokauri growth area around Lake Waiwhakareke and on the ridgelines. Measures have been undertaken to recognise and ensure their protection. Additional character areas, for example around Hamilton Lake, are being considered.

Outcome

To identify Hamilton's special character areas, maintain and enhance their unique identity and ensure new buildings and structures are designed to complement the area's special character.

The plan response

The District Plan can identify areas of special character and promote development that is appropriate.

Option 1

The current approach of the District Plan which identifies special character areas. This option would include a review of additional special character areas to be included in the Plan.

Option 2

Review the provisions for character area protection and strengthen rules in specific areas for the placement of buildings.

Option 3

Create good practice design guides that show how to design appropriate new buildings and structures within character areas.

What we are thinking so far

We could use a combination of all of the above. This would retain existing special character areas and identify new special character areas. This approach would also involve preparing design guides. The advantage of this approach would be that special character areas will be maintained and enhanced. New development in these areas would be in keeping with the character of the area.

A combination of Options 1, 2 and 3 would best meet the desired outcome as it properly recognises the importance of both existing and potential new special character areas and would provide more specific rules and design guidelines to protect and enhance them.

Built Heritage

The city's built heritage is a valuable resource that needs to be protected from demolition, unsympathetic alterations and inappropriate development.

Hamilton's heritage buildings and structures include churches, bridges, schools, monuments, houses and commercial buildings whose integral heritage value is often underpinned by their site context, which may comprise trees, vegetation, fences, outbuildings and subdivision.

Heritage is not frozen in time and it is important to promote the sustainable re-use of heritage buildings and treat them as a resource that has ongoing historical, cultural and economic value.

Outcome

To protect the city's built heritage and ensure that it is protected from demolition and unsympathetic development of the site. We also recognise that flexibility needs to be provided to ensure the city's built heritage is a sustainable resource.

The plan response

The current District Plan seeks to protect our built heritage from demolition and inappropriate alterations but has no protection over interiors and little over the wider site context.

Option 1

The current approach of the District Plan where protection of built heritage is focused on exterior facades, with few rules to protect their surroundings.

Option 2

Strengthen the District Plan by updating the heritage schedules with new provisions that recognise the value of site and context and include revisions to the rules to promote the sustainable re-use of heritage buildings along with providing non-regulatory incentives.

Option 3

Adopt a more protectionist approach by increasing the number of heritage items and sites that are scheduled in the District Plan and strengthen the rules to ensure that the protection of heritage values is elevated further and flexibility is removed.

What we are thinking so far

Option 2 would best meet the desired outcome because its approach would ensure that a comprehensive sample of Hamilton's heritage buildings, structures and their site context is recognised and appropriately managed. Sustainability of heritage can also be encouraged through flexibility in land use and regulatory incentives.

Archaeology & Cultural Heritage

Hamilton has a rich history. There are a number of sites of historic, archaeological, and cultural significance that relate to the development of the city and the wider region since pre-European times. This heritage resource provides an important contribution to the identity and character of the Hamilton.

Archaeological sites include military redoubts, objects and locations associated with industry and early European settlement. Sites of Maori significance include locations of former pa (defended sites), papakainga (settlements), mahinga kai (food resources) and ceremonial rituals, and landscape features.

Outcome

We want to ensure that sites of archaeological and cultural significance are recognised and protected from damage or destruction. We also want to ensure that sites of significance are commemorated, raising people's awareness and appreciation of our heritage.

The plan response

Within the District Plan, sites of archaeological and cultural significance are mapped and there are provisions in the plan to recognise and protect them.

Option 1

The current approach of the District Plan whereby archaeological and cultural sites are identified and rules focus on protection from damage, destruction and modification.

Option 2

Strengthen the District Plan and adopt a broader focus than purely preservation. This could include potential reconstruction of sites, or encouragement of site commemoration through pou (carved posts), signage and vegetation.

Option 3

Adopt an incentives based approach with a more non-regulatory regime of archaeological and cultural site management. This may include the development of education and awareness programmes and the adoption of financial incentives. However, ultimate protection of archaeological and cultural heritage would rely largely on the goodwill of property owners.

What we are thinking so far

Option 2 would best achieve the desired outcomes. It would protect a range of sites and their surrounds, and recognise their true values. Commemoration of a site would be encouraged to raise public awareness.



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The period for public comments closes on 29 October 2010.



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