

NEWS

June 2005

1	<p>City takes firm line on shoddy developers (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman)</p> <p>This article expands upon the news item the day before, describing the way in which Auckland City Council planning department is supposedly undertaking a culture change, by introducing design quality criteria. Response to the proposals is published within this article. One is from Nigel Cook of the lobby group Urban Auckland. He congratulates Auckland City for what he describes as a step forward, but describes the two proposed design oriented appointments as "dictatorships", the differentiation between good, bad and ugly as a minefield and pleads for future transparency. Note: the concerns expressed by Nigel Cook are largely also those of Civic Trust Auckland.</p>
1	<p>Decent design? This isn't the Auckland we know (New Zealand Herald Rudman's city)</p> <p>Slightly tongue in cheek as usual, Brian Rudman deals here with Auckland City Council proposals for applying design criteria to any future upgrading of 16,300 so-called character homes. The Auckland City Mayor states that his Council is serious about protecting heritage and neighbourhoods. This finally brings the heritage protection of older buildings in the inner Auckland suburb's up to the level reached many years ago in places like Devonport.</p>
3	<p>Tiny apartments banned (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman)</p> <p>After years of weak planning rules lack of building controls and a rubber stamp culture by council staff, new design controls are introduced for apartments within the CBD. The following minimum sizes will apply: studio 35 square metres one-bedroom 45 square metres two-bedroom 70 square metres and three bedroom plus 90 square metres. Minimum ceiling height of bedrooms and living rooms will be 2.4 m and the other rooms 2.3 m (previously 2.2 m). There is to be a minimum corridor width of 1.5 m and minimum sizes for windows, internal storage, wardrobe space and separation distances between buildings. Note: in some cases the proposed minimum unit sizes are now higher within the CBD than permitted in the suburbs. By what planning principles should this be so?</p>
5	<p>Population boom spurs 40 new schools Auckland (New Zealand Herald Patrick Crewdson)</p> <p>42 new schools are listed for construction within the Auckland region, with completion dates varying from 2006 to 2009 or later.</p>
8	<p>Urban design criteria: Vince controls too strict (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman)</p> <p>In another article covering recently introduced design criteria, fencing controls are criticised. In the residential 1 zone fences should be no higher than 1.2 m (no change) and should be in keeping with the character of the street. In the residential 2 zone the height restriction is 1.4 m (currently 2 m) which can be increased to 1.8 m where 40% of the fence is transparent. The article also notes a further restriction to be imposed, not previously published, requiring resource consent for the demolition or removal of homes within the so-called "character suburbs", typically the Residential one and two zones. The public has only until July 1 to make submissions.</p>
13	<p>Urban design failure (New Zealand Herald Tony Watkins)</p> <p>Pulling no punches, Tony Watkins laments the pathetic urban design throughout Auckland in the recent past. He highlights Manukau for its urban development, beneath the flight path of New Zealand's main international airport. He criticises development on the ex-railway land in downtown Auckland as a shambles of urban mediocrity. Materialism and developer profits have led to soulless building and urban area designs. Tony Watkins is a co-director of the International union of architects' sustainability work programme. Note: This is an excellent article which reflects many of the principles of Civic Trust Auckland.</p>
15	<p>ARC. chief calls for review of urban intensification proposals (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman)</p> <p>Auckland regional Council chairman Mike Lee is calling for an overhaul of the region's controversial growth strategy, including a freeze on intensification plans in suburbs like Glen Innes. He is opposed in his views by Auckland City Mayor Dick Hubbard and deputy mayor Dr Bruce Hucker. He is supported in his views by the majority of those living in Glen Innes. Note: Civic Trust Auckland would question the premise behind the need for a big population increase, either for Auckland or New Zealand as a whole and believes that planning is virtually impossible without some detailed knowledge of government intentions. It acknowledges that in parts of Auckland low-density urban development is probably unsustainable. Mid to high density development must incorporate the best planning ideas possible, as there have been numberless examples, both in Auckland and elsewhere in New Zealand, also overseas, of shocking design errors in this field.</p>
16	<p>Cullen: Rail tracks appalling-On Track: They are still safe-Who is right? (New Zealand Herald Kevin Taylor)</p> <p>Finance Minister Michael Cullen says the nation's Rail tracks are worse than bad, they are appalling. Upgrade costs will exceed the estimates of last year. Last year the government bought tracks back off Australian transport company Toll, pledging to spend \$200 million on upgrading. Toll itself had taken over late last year from TranzRail. OnTrack is the government Company which will maintain the tracks. A spokesperson from Ontrack said that they would not use the</p>

	term appalling. Note: in the Auckland region many rail tracks are visible from nearby roads and the quality of rail tracks has been obvious to Aucklanders for many years. Who forgot to inspect the tracks before they were purchased and who is now responsible for a future financial black hole?
17	Volcanic makeover and volcanic mangle (New Zealand Herald Rudman's city) This article compares the way in which Auckland City Council is proposing to undertake a major makeover of Maungawhau/Mt Eden, as a first stage towards transforming Auckland's volcanic field to possible World heritage status on the one hand, yet elsewhere at Puketepapa/Mt Roskill it is proposing to bring in the bulldozers to cut into the north face, in order to create a cycleway. Note: Civic trust Auckland applauds efforts by the Mayor to upgrade and reinstate Auckland's volcanic landscapes. Our volcanic landscape protection subcommittee has been active during the year in this area, in particular in efforts to save the small volcanic remnant Te Tauomo/Purchas.
17	Trucks in motorway fast lanes (New Zealand Herald-letter from R Culver) This letter appears to have been in response to that of another writer, who wants large trucks out of motorway fast lanes and a reduction in truck speeds generally. This writer points out that the speed limit for truck and trailer outfits was recently raised to 90 km per hour, incredibly, despite a Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) report which said " in December 1998 only 9% of tested vehicles complied fully with the legal brake performance requirements and 68% were found to be in a dangerous condition" A 2003 survey found 65% of heavy vehicles failed the minimum brake performance requirements. 87% of semi-trailers and 79% of full trailers failed the roadside roller brake test.
22	Court may (yet again) decide the fate of speedway at Western Springs (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman) The speedway operation at Western Springs has the support of Auckland City Council, but is opposed by the Springs Stadium residents Association. The operators signed up to an 85 dB limit in 1988. They now wish to exceed this limit and require court approval. The article does not make clear the reason why a noise limit of the past now needs to be exceeded.
27	Spaghetti Junction changes (New Zealand Herald advertisement) This advertisement notes that city bound traffic on the north-western motorway now needs to exit at Nelson Street from a left lane rather than the extreme right lane as previously. A new right lane now provides direct access to the port area.