**Update for Members**

As you know the Character Coalition took an active part in the process of forming the Auckland Unitary Plan. This was an exhaustive, and exhausting, process. We were largely successful in ensuring that the Unitary Plan retained the Special Character Area protection for those parts of Auckland where the existing form, buildings and amenity values give the city its character. We are concerned that, after all that effort, those areas are again under threat as a result of Government policies.

Auckland is at one of the most crucial turning points in its history. Auckland Council now has the huge responsibility of deciding how this city develops for the next 50 to 100 years.

We are urging the Council to stand up for the city against the latest attack on local democracy by central government. We recently made a submission to Government on its Policy Statement on Urban Development. A copy is on our website. Unfortunately, it was largely ignored.

We are now urging Councillors ad Local Board members to defend Auckland against the Government’s housing density edict for an across-the-board, three storey/three home housing density throughout Auckland.

No area of the city deserves to have intensive housing forced on it without going through a resource consent process. This will be a green light for developers to put up cheap, badly designed buildings that will be miserable to live in and miserable to look at.

**The Real Problems**

Auckland has 30 years of housing growth capacity already in its zoning. This proposal ignores this, and also the fact there is not the infrastructure to support this demand for higher density.

It is also ignoring the fact there is another form of government in this country which is – local government.

Our Council and Local Board members have been democratically elected and must have the final say over how their cities should develop. It is councils that have the best interests of the city at heart not central government.

**Auckland Unitary Plan**

The Auckland Unitary plan went through a thorough and arduous public process and should not be pushed aside in this way.

Part of that process decided to protect the historic areas of Auckland with Special Character Area overlays, and included design standards to protect the quality of life of Aucklanders. These decisions should not be over-turned without consultation with Aucklanders because of a central government decree.

**Special Character Areas**

Special Character areas are about quantity and homogeneity and to have them interrupted by out of scale, concrete and steel structures will be the death knell of the historic fabric of this city.

We believe if three storey developments are allowed everywhere in the city it will mean the eventual ruin of our historic areas. Old villas, small cottages and bungalows will be squeezed beside 11 metre concrete block housing developments and the continuity and character of these historic areas will be lost.

But it is also important to protect the amenity and streetscape of **all** Auckland suburbs by ensuring that urban design is an intrinsic part of housing developments. Without that our suburbs will begin to resemble the brutalism of post war eastern European townscapes and create potential future slums.

So as well as the destruction of Auckland’s character, and the intolerable pressure that this proposal will place on Auckland’s creaking infrastructure, and the cost of upgrading that, the quality of life of all Aucklanders will be irrevocably reduced. Existing homes will suffer from loss of sun and natural light and loss of privacy. Some will become unlivable. The removal of trees and vegetation, the lungs of the city, which is already happening will get even worse.

**Defend Auckland**

So, we are urging Council, on behalf of all Aucklanders to respond to this edict by:

1. Representing to Government that this proposal is unacceptable and undemocratic and should be abandoned
2. If that is unsuccessful, and the proposal proceeds, identifying all Special Character Areas area as a “qualifying” matter so this proposal will not apply to them.
3. And to try to get government to modify its proposal to at least include some design standards that will go some way towards protecting our quality of life and preventing Auckland looking like an example of 1950’s Soviet architecture, with an equivalent quality of life for its citizens.

Council must defend our city and its Special Character areas against low quality, poorly-located, high density housing that over time will turn Auckland into an unlivable and ugly city.

Our Councillors and Local Board members were elected to safeguard Auckland, to govern for the present and the future and Auckland’s long-term identity depends on you.

**What can you do?**

As a member of the Character Coalition, we ask you to write to your Councillors and Local Board members (or speak to them if you know them personally) telling them that this proposal is unacceptable, and why, and that now is the time for them to stand up for Aucklanders against it.

Click here for [Ward councillors](https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/governing-body-wards-committees/wards/Pages/ward-councillors.aspx) and [Local Board](https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/local-boards/Pages/find-local-board.aspx) contact details.

It is important that you do that now, as Government has said that the legislation giving effect to its proposal will be passed by Christmas, so there is not much time for us to influence it.

If possible please send a copy of your letter or email to the Coalition at sally@charactercoalition.org.nz so the Coalition has a record of the extent of opposition to the proposal.

If you have any queries about the proposal or would like to help further, please contact John Burns (jaburns@xtra.co.nz) who is co-ordinating the Coalition’s response to Council and Government.