

Heritage Advice - PC 13 - Height Limits for Specified Scheduled Heritage Places in the Central City

1. There are some groups of scheduled heritage items and settings in the Central City that have specific heritage values and physical characteristics that could be impacted by inappropriate heights of adjacent urban development. These parts of the central city are iconic landmarks for the district, and are sensitive to impacts of intensification. In recognition of this, height limits are currently in place in the operative Christchurch District Plan within and/or adjacent to three groups of heritage items – in New Regent Street, the Arts Centre and Lower High Street.
2. It is not proposed to continue the 13m height limit in Lower High Street as the remaining intact group of heritage items on one side of the street between Tuam and St Asaph Streets is within a proposed 32m height limit area (lower than the proposed City Centre zone height limit of 90m). This, together with the heritage provisions for scheduled Heritage Items and settings is considered to provide sufficient protection of Historic Heritage from inappropriate development. It is proposed to continue the existing height limits for two areas of the central city which are important heritage sites for the city – New Regent Street and Montreal Street opposite the Arts Centre. The heritage values and significance of these places are set out in the Statements of Significance attached to the Schedule of Significant Historic Heritage Items.
3. There are nineteen scheduled Highly Significant Heritage Items on the Arts Centre site. The whole Arts Centre block is a Heritage Setting. The operative District Plan provides for a height limit of 16 metres within the Arts Centre setting; a height limit of 11m in the city block to the north; a 14m height limit in the block to the south and 28m to the east. It is proposed to retain the 16m height limit on the setting of the Arts Centre. This will provide for the protection of the complex of buildings from development of an inappropriate height which could impact on shading, views, and contextual heritage values of the Arts Centre complex.
4. A Residential Heritage Area (Inner City West RHA) is proposed which takes in the city blocks to the north and south of the Arts Centre block. The provisions limit height of new development in the RHA to 11 metres. This will help protect the heritage values of the RHA, and also provides for an appropriate scale of development adjacent to the Arts Centre. In the current Plan the height limit

to the east of the Arts Centre is 28 metres. It is proposed to retain this height limit for the sites with boundaries on the east side of Montreal Street (sites in the Worcester Boulevard/Hereford Street block only, which are located directly opposite the Arts Centre). This is because of the visual dominance effects that modelling has shown would result from developments built to the proposed permitted zone heights - 21 metres road wall height, but rising at graduated podium heights beyond 28 metres up to a potential 90 metres in the centre of the sites.

5. This is lower than the height limit of 45 metres proposed for Cathedral Square (which is a scheduled heritage item in the Plan), and Victoria Street, which is based on a transition of urban form between the consolidated central city 90 metre height limit zone and the surrounding lower height zones, and, in the case of Cathedral Square, on limiting shading effects which has shown to be effective at a height of 45 metres in that location (see evaluation in PC14 s32 evaluation for chapter 15 Commercial).
6. The modelling for the Arts Centre shows a significantly greater visual dominance effect on the Arts Centre for buildings 45 metres high on the east side of Montreal Street than occurs for a building height of 28 metres. The proposed height of 28 metres will also be more in keeping with the proposed permitted scale of the buildings in the RHA in the adjoining blocks to the north and south of the Arts Centre than a height of 45 metres. The sun studies show that a height reduction from 45 metres to 28 metres has little observable impact on shading of the Arts Centre site, so the argument for the proposed height is based on visual dominance effects on a key precinct of Highly Significant heritage buildings, rather than shading effects, and is in line with the proposal for New Regent Street (see below). Sites in the blocks to the northeast and southeast of the Arts Centre have not been included, due to the greater overall separation distance of potential development on those sites, as these sites lie diagonally opposite the Arts Centre and only the corner of these sites is adjoining.
7. New Regent Street, a street of continuous Spanish Mission style shops, is scheduled as a Highly Significant Heritage Item, along with a heritage setting which consists of all properties contained within the street. Two buildings at the northern end of the street are more recent and not in the

same style as the rest of the street. These are located within the heritage setting. It is proposed that the current height limit in the operative Plan of 8 metres for buildings within the setting of New Regent Street be retained. The specific characteristics of this heritage item and setting mean that urban development enablement involving buildings up to 90m high (as per the proposed City Centre zone height limit) in and adjacent to New Regent Street would be inappropriate. Continuation of the operative 28m height limit for sites to the east, west, north and south of New Regent Street will provide sufficient protection of this Heritage item from development of an inappropriate height, which could cause inappropriate contrasts of scale, and downdraughts, as well as impacting the architectural and contextual heritage values. Sun studies have shown that while there is some reduction in shading effects from continuing to reduce permitted height to 28 metres on sites surrounding New Regent Street, modelling demonstrates that the greater benefit from the lower 28 metre height limit is a reduction in visual dominance effects from those anticipated by permitted zone heights of 45 to 90 metres on these sites.

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