

# BEFORE THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER

of the Resource  
Management Act 1991

AND IN THE MATTER OF

Queenstown Lakes Proposed  
District Plan – Chapter 13 –  
Wanaka Town Centre Zone

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF LOUISE WRIGHT OF ASSEMBLY ARCHITECTS  
ON BEHALF OF**

**SUBMITTER 240 – Gem Lake Limited**

17 November 2016

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**Accompanying Document:** *Wanaka Town Centre: Submission on Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan* by Assembly Architects Ltd

## Introduction

1. My name is Louise Jayne Hikihi Wright. I am a Registered Architect. I hold a Bachelor of Architecture (First Class Honours) from Victoria University of Wellington, 2001. I am a member of the New Zealand Registered Architects Board, the New Zealand Institute of Architects Awards Advisory Board, and the Jack's Point Design Review Board. I am the 2017 Convenor of the New Zealand Institute of Architects national awards programme.
  
2. I am a design director of Assembly Architects Limited, an Arrowtown based architecture practice that I established with Justin Wright, Registered Architect in 2005. The practice designs residential, commercial and public architecture. The practice was awarded a New Zealand Architecture award for the public and commercial development at Wellington Zoo, and architecture, design and property awards for the design of the Britomart Showcases in the Britomart precinct in Auckland. Assembly Architects are currently designing a proposed 36 room hotel in Wanaka, and the Stackbrae subdivision in Cardrona Valley Road, Wanaka.
  
3. Prior to establishing Assembly Architects I was an Associate at Athfield Architects Limited in Wellington, an architecture practice renowned for design in the public and urban realm. During that time I was involved in the design of the following urban projects and precincts:
  - in Wellington: Waitangi Park, Wellington Waterfront, Manners Mall (and Golden Mile), the Upper Hutt Main Street Strategy (not implemented) and the Victoria University Gateways and Pathways works
  
  - in Christchurch (pre-Earthquakes) the Litchfield Lanes, Turners and Growers site, Jade Stadium surrounding streetscapes and the House of Tahu
  
  - in Auckland the Auckland City Library (to Lorne Street) and the Waitakere Civic Centre (in association with Architectus)
  
4. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and that I agree to comply with it. I confirm that I have considered all the material facts that I am aware of that might alter or detract from the opinions

that I express, and that this evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person.

## Scope of Evidence

5. Assembly Architects Limited have been engaged by Gem Lake Limited (#240) to provide expert architectural design evidence on the proposed Wanaka Town Centre Zone, and in particular the issue of extending the Wanaka Height Precinct to Helwick Street. In considering the issue of building height we have also considered the wider urban design context of the Wanaka Town Centre.
6. Assembly Architects Limited were engaged by Gem Lake Limited (#240) to consider development options and provide architect design services for 28 Helwick Street (the old Wanaka Police Station). The scope of this included considering short term development options for the existing buildings on the site (under current rules), as well as future long term development of the site (best use regardless of current rules).
7. I defer to the planning evidence of Ian Greaves, Southern Planning Group for planning matters for Gem Lake Limited.
8. The Key Matters to be addressed in this evidence are
  - Building Height Controls: Limits and Opportunities
  - The Wanaka Town Centre Height Precinct
  - A wider application of the Height Precinct
  - Helwick Street
  - Shading Effects

## Building Height Controls: Limits and Opportunities

9. Height controls set limits on maximum building heights. These limits relate to the development opportunity, insofar as development is considered as to what will fit within the height limit. Height controls are typically set in metres above existing ground level.
10. Existing Height controls along Helwick Street are set out in Rule 13.5.8 by specifying a maximum building height of 8m to an eave line and 10m to a ridge line. The Section 32 Evaluation Report – Issue 2 notes that a “significant proportion of resource consents...were required for breaches of height and/or coverage and that all were being granted.” This suggests the current height limit may be insufficient to achieve quality outcomes.
11. **Figures 8a and 8b (page 8)** demonstrate that the application of the current height limit can result in either a two storey or three storey building. The two storey building (**Fig 8a**) can have higher ceiling heights including at ground level and above, and can have space for integrated building services (such as heating and ventilation services) within the interfloor and roof spaces. The three storey building (**Fig 8b**) has lower ceiling heights, reduced to the minimum height one would expect in a standard NZ home, with no interfloor space to support integrated building services, and with no space for roof articulation (eg a gabled roof form). While the development opportunity of a three storey building may achieve greater square metres of development, the quality achieved is lesser and the scale of the ground floor is less appropriate to a retail / commercial zone.
12. The current height controls for the town centre (except for the proposed Height Precinct) can therefore support a quality two storey building, or a lesser quality 3 storey building. Any 3 storey building under the current height rules would have a compromised, low quality ground floor height, a flat roof parapet (as opposed to an articulated roof) that could cause inconsistency along Helwick Street, particularly in regard to canopy heights.
13. In my view 10m-12m height is sufficient to allow for a quality three storey building, with any additional height over that affording more scope for roof shape and articulation (for example, gabled roofs). (**Figures 10a and 10b, page 10**) demonstrates two 3-storey building types achievable within a 10-12m height limit.

14. Several multi-story buildings are shown on Figures **7a, 7b and 7c** to demonstrate local examples of building height and floor levels.
15. As height limits are normally considered from original ground line, due to the potential heights required to suit the flood levels in Wanaka the heights discussed are taken from achievable ground floor level, rather than from original ground level.
16. The Wanaka Town Centre Character Guideline recommends a minimum of 3.5m interfloor height for ground floor spaces, with 4m recommendation for quality retail spaces. Therefore in the town centre, with the current height limits, the emphasis should be on quality 2 storey developments, or the height limit should be increased to allow for better quality 3 storey development.
17. Building height controls are not a requirement. A developer can and may develop buildings that are also lower than the height control. An ideal or aspirational scenario occurs in the town centre when ground floors are generous, levels and canopies are consistent with neighbouring buildings, and buildings have flexibility to respond to local character in their design. The Wanaka Town Centre Guidelines describes aspirational building forms and appropriate urban design responses.

## The Wanaka Height Precinct

18. The proposed Wanaka Town Centre Height Precinct allows for greater height limits being 12m to an eave and 14m to a ridgeline. This is for a limited area of the Town Centre, as shown on proposed map 21 (**Fig 2a, page 2**).
19. **Figures 9a and 9b (page 9)** demonstrate that the application of the proposed height limit can result in either a three storey or four storey building. Echoing the examples above, the three storey building (**Fig 9a**) can have higher ceiling heights including at ground level and above, and can have space for integrated building services (such as heating and ventilation services) within the interfloor and roof spaces. There is scope for variation and shape in the roof design. The four storey building (**Fig 9b**) has lower ceiling heights, reduced to the minimum height one would expect in a standard NZ home, and has little scope for roof shape.

20. The proposed Wanaka Height Precinct can therefore support three to four storey buildings. If a mix of three and four storey buildings is constructed this may result in inconsistent floor levels among neighbouring buildings.
21. The proposed District Plan Map 21 sets out the Wanaka Town Centre Height Precinct Overlay (*Fig 2a, page 2*). This area includes a predominantly developed strip along Ardmore Street (opposite the lake front), the block bounded by Ardmore Street, Dunmore Street, Dungarvon Street and Helwick Street, and the remaining strip to Dungarvon Street, such that the entire Dungarvon Street strip facing Pembroke Park is included. The main retail street, Helwick Street, is excluded as is Brownston Street.
22. Building height is a key determinant of building hierarchy in a town centre. The location of the proposed height precinct acknowledges current patterns (some existing 3 storey buildings at the Ardmore/ Dungarvon block) and extends the precinct to the remaining lots in Dungarvon and Ardmore Streets. The provision of height in this manner provides a focus to two of the town edges (street interfaces to the town centre) and supports the current arterial traffic pattern along Ardmore Street.
23. Differential development limits within a town centre can confuse the town hierarchy and lead to developments of varying quality. With the proposed height overlay (and resulting hierarchy), the Street edge buildings on Dungarvon and Ardmore Streets appear to have greater importance and development potential than the rest of the town centre, including the retail "main street" - Helwick Street.
24. An example of potential development from the two height limits in the town centre includes:
  - a. Quality 2 storey or lesser quality 3 storey building in the 8-10m, and
  - b. Quality 3 storey or lesser quality 4 storey building in the 12-14m, and
  - c. Single or 2 storey buildings in both areas

## Extending the Wanaka Height Precinct

25. The provision of additional height along Ardmore and Dungarvon Streets begins to set up a “perimeter block” for the Wanaka Town Centre, with Dunmore Street as the inner public realm, with potentially better connection to the Civic centre and library. Variation and architectural hierarchy create an exciting and rich environment, where vertical emphasis and a variety of articulated facades with many entrances, is encouraged (*Fig 4, page 4*).
26. Public laneways, courtyards and connections between streets also contribute to a vibrant and well connected urban space.
27. The *Lake Wanaka Lake Front Development* identifies reduction of arterial traffic away from Ardmore along Brownston Street. If the arterial route is encouraged to Brownston, the height precinct should be extended to include the town centre lots along Brownston Street, particularly between Dungarvon and Helwick Streets to afford a consistent town edge treatment, and complete the perimeter block to the third town edge.
28. Where differential height differences apply on neighbouring lots, contiguous development opportunities are reduced, as is the chance of contiguous floor heights. Therefore height controls within the town centre should be applied with consideration to the resulting urban form.
29. As the main retail street, Helwick Street has importance in the town centre and this should be reflected in the development opportunities afforded it.

## Helwick Street

30. Submission #240 proposes the Proposed District Plan is modified to include the zone of Helwick Street within the Wanaka Height Precinct. For clarity, this means both sides of Helwick Street, for the length of Helwick Street between Ardmore and Brownston Streets. It does not include the Town Centre Transitional Zone. The area is shown on *Figure 2b, page 2*.

31. In the proposed District Plan Map 21, the Wanaka Town Centre Height Precinct Overlay includes parts of the Lake end of Helwick Street (known as lower Helwick Street). The Overlay is not applied symmetrically across Helwick Street.
32. The Wanaka Town Centre Character guidelines identify Helwick Street as the main retail street in the Wanaka Town Centre. It also cites a “notable inconsistency between the lower town centre block and the upper town centre block in terms of streetscape detail” (p.34). Differential building height limits between the lower and upper parts of Helwick Street reinforces this inconsistency.
33. Helwick Street, as the main retail street, should have a consistent height control along its length, of sufficient height to achieve good quality (rather than low quality) 3 storey buildings. This would require an increase over the current 8-10m height control to a minimum of 10m - 12m or preferably 12m – 14m.
34. When arterial traffic is encouraged along Brownston Street, the top of Helwick Street becomes increasingly important, as the prime access to the main retail street, and as the prime viewshaft and connection to the Lake through the town. The Helwick/ Brownston intersection therefore becomes the “gateway” to the town centre, and to the Lake beyond, and this should be treated with an appropriate streetscape response for the length of Helwick Street, reinforcing the perspectival view to the lake.
35. I concur with the aspirational cross-section for Helwick Street identified in the Character Guidelines, with a reduced carriageway, parallel parking and an inset avenue of deciduous trees. With the generous width of Helwick Street, an increase in height can still be supported without negatively impacting the streetscape. **Fig 11, page 11** shows the cross-section in the Character Guidelines with an indicative 8m, 2 storey building each side of the street. **Fig 12, page 12** shows a modified cross-section with an indicative 3 storey building (with a gable roof facing the street up to the max 14m height limit) and an indicative 4 storey building, with the 4<sup>th</sup> storey is set back from the frontage to the minimum 3m.
36. Assembly Architects Ltd prepared sketch perspectives demonstrating indicative 3 storey development as viewed along Brownston Street (**Fig 13** before and **Fig 14** after), Helwick Street from Brownston Street intersection (**Fig 15** before and **Fig 16** after), and into Dunmore Street as viewed from Helwick Street intersection (**Fig 17** before and **Fig 18** after).

37. In considering the Gem Lake submission #240, Mr Timothy Church, an urban designer for QLDC concluded the lower part of Helwick Street should be included within the Wanaka Height Precinct to match the southern side of the street and I support this. He also anticipated future demand for additional height along the remainder of Helwick Street in response to the arterial focus on Brownston Street, and potential gateway function of Helwick Street from Brownston Street.
38. I see no advantage for the long term in maintaining different height controls along Helwick Street, or delaying an increase in height limit for the street if a future requirement has been identified. Such inconsistencies in height controls promote inconsistencies in the built result, and lots will develop to differing levels of quality, or development may be deferred on lots until such time that height limits align with commercial feasibility.

## Shading Effects

39. QLDC Planner Vicki Jones recommended extending the height precinct on the Eastern side of Helwick, up to Dunmore Street. However she did not support extending the height precinct further up Helwick (to Brownston), concurring with Mr Church that consolidation should be encouraged in the proposed height precinct (before extending it) and that no information had been provided by the submitter with regard to the potential effects of the extra height in terms of shading, views or character.
40. Shading diagrams have been prepared to compare current building height limits with Wanaka height precinct limits (applied to Helwick Street). **Fig 6a (page 6)** demonstrates indicative building blocks of 8-10m height and their shading at midday Winter (25<sup>th</sup> June) and at midday Summer (25<sup>th</sup> December). **Fig 6b** demonstrates indicative building blocks of 12-14m height and their shading at midday Winter (25<sup>th</sup> June) and at midday Summer (25<sup>th</sup> December).
41. During winter, both scenarios (8-10m and 12-14m) indicate a shaded Helwick Street at midday. During summer however, the sun angle is higher and Helwick Street still receives sun, with little tangible difference in the shading due to the additional height.

Prepared by

**Louise Wright. B.Arch(hons1)**

**Registered Architect**

17 November 2016

An aerial photograph of Wanaka, New Zealand, showing the town's layout along the shore of Lake Wanaka. The lake is a deep blue, and the surrounding landscape includes green fields, residential areas with houses, and large mountains in the distance under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# **WANAKA TOWN CENTRE**

SUBMISSION ON  
PROPOSED QUEENSTOWN  
LAKES DISTRICT PLAN

ASSEMBLY  
ARCHITECTS  
LIMITED

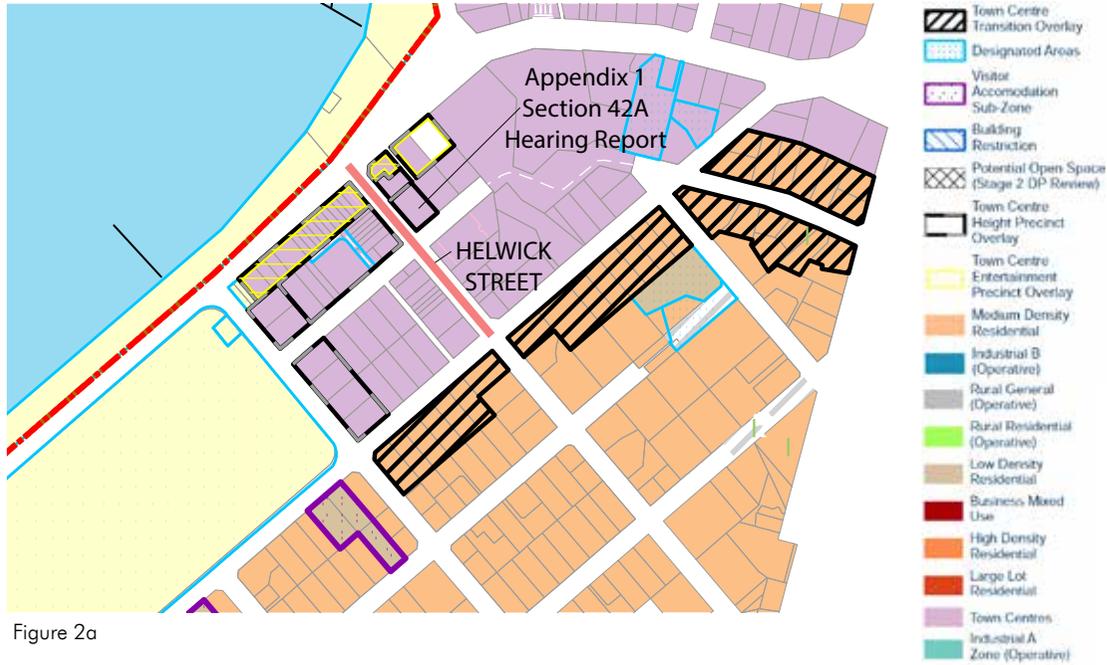


Figure 2a

### QLDC PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN CHANGE

As outlined in Map 21 - Proposed District Plan Maps



Figure 2b

### SUBMISSION CHANGE - HELWICK STREET FOCUS

Aims of Submission 240 - incorporating upper Helwick Street within the Town Centre Height Precinct Overlay

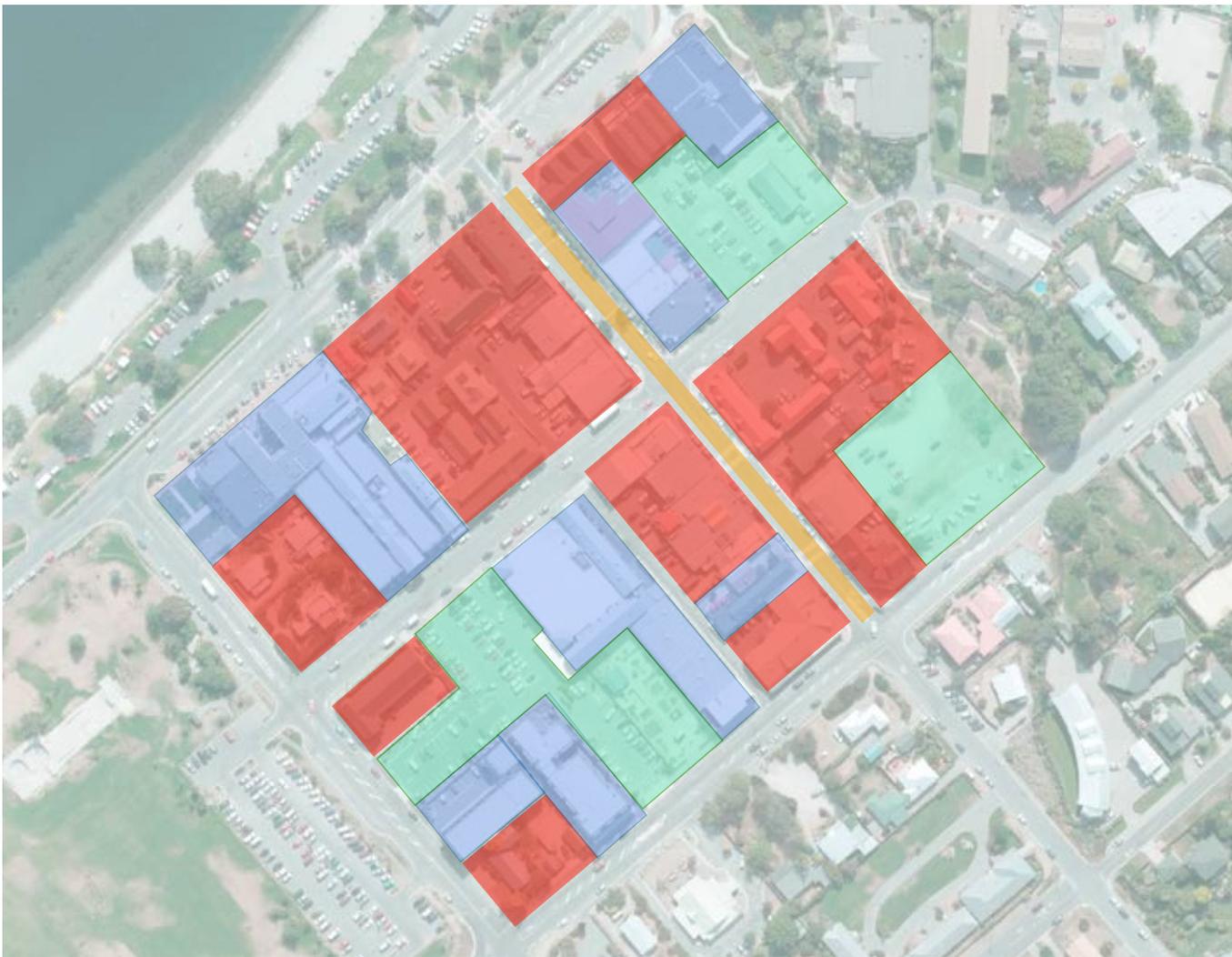


Figure 3

### **BUILDING AGE DIAGRAM**

Assessment of building age and buildings most likely to be developed.

## PERIMETER BLOCK PRINCIPLES

Principles of the perimeter block and quality urban design

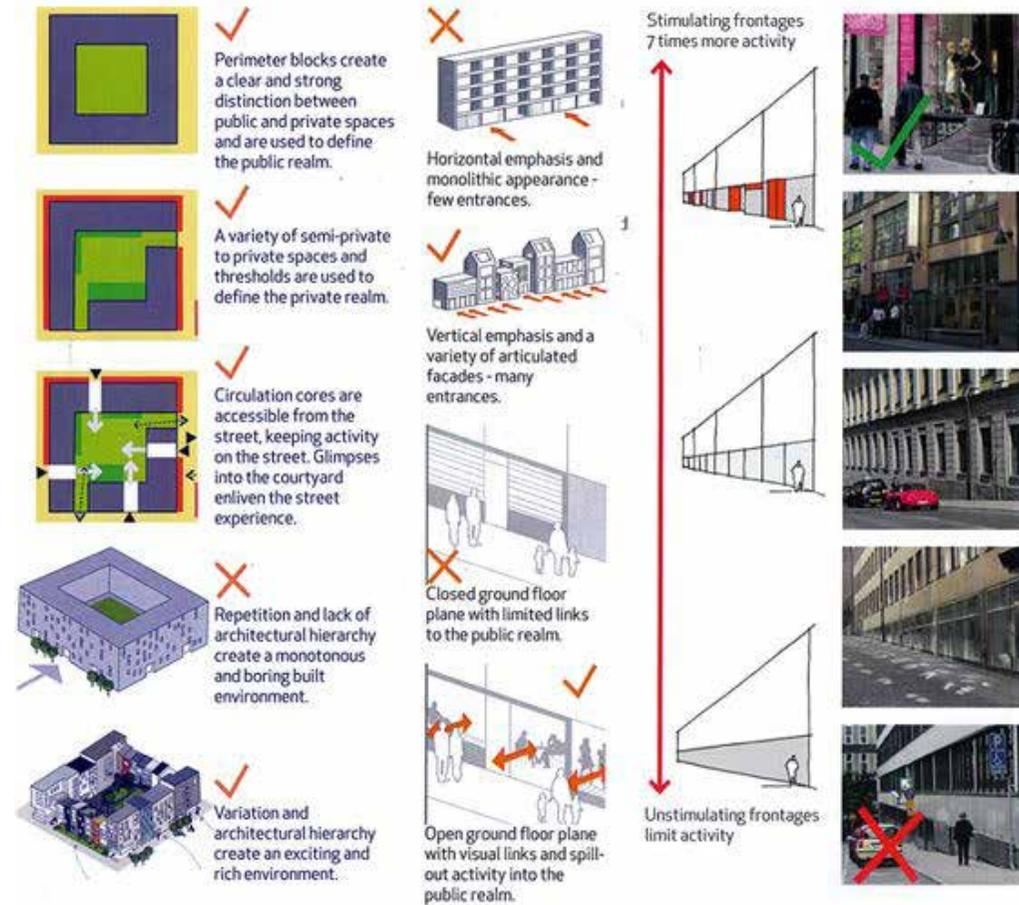


Figure 4

MAKE Architects and Gehl et al (January 2011) Science Central Design and Access Statement for ONE North east, Newcastle University and Newcastle City Council

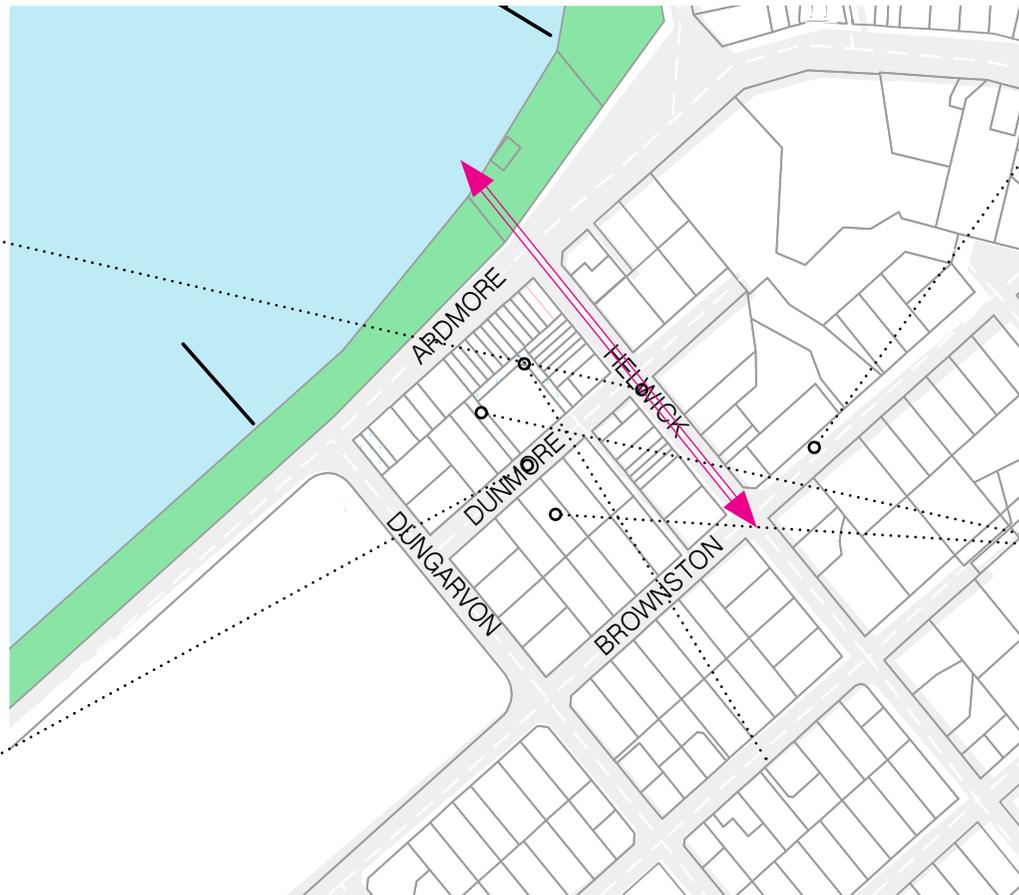
### HELWICK STREET

To become gateway to the lakeshore from the arterial Brownston Street, reducing the volume of traffic through Admore and providing a safer and more public friendly link to the lakeshore. Similar design for Helwick should be applied to for the entire length to engage the entire street as a connector to the lake. Potential development of Helwick St with mixed use, high quality 3 storey units. This aligns with the Character Guidelines identifying Helwick as the main retail street. Similar built form to existing on Admore Street.

### DUNMORE MINOR ROAD

With the hierarchy placed upon Helwick and Dungarvon, Dunmore opens up to be the centre of the entire perimeter block. Its width allows the street to be developed as a pedestrian friendly zone and lane - and could be the focus of markets or the removal of vehicles completely. Dunmore would benefit from slow vehicular movements and a focus on pedestrian activity.

Figure 5



THE FUTURE OF WANAKA: THE PERIMETER BLOCK

### TOWN CENTRE TRANSITION

Brownston Street to become major arterial route, providing buffer between Town Centre and residential, as described by Mr. Church - QLDC comments 23.7

### FINER GRAIN

By incorporating a larger area in the perimeter block, finer grain elements are set up in a more legible manner. This also allows for the incorporation of safe city principles such as CPTED and lighting requirements. Laneways reduce pedestrian and car interactions, provide safer access through the Town Centre. These areas also begin to address the more human scale elements were public spaces open and pedestrians are the focus.

### HIGH QUALITY URBAN DESIGN

Apply holistic urban design principles to Wanaka



25th JUN - 8-10m Limit Developed to Full Potential - Midday Shading



25th DEC - 8-10m Limit Developed to Full Potential - Midday Shading

Figure 6a

**MAXIMISED EXISTING 8-10m**



25th JUN - 12-14m Limit Developed to Full Potential - Midday Shading



25th DEC - 12-14m Limit Developed to Full Potential - Midday Shading

Figure 6b

**MAXIMISED SUBMISSION 12-14m**

**EFFECTS OF SHADING**

Shading implications of a potential height increase

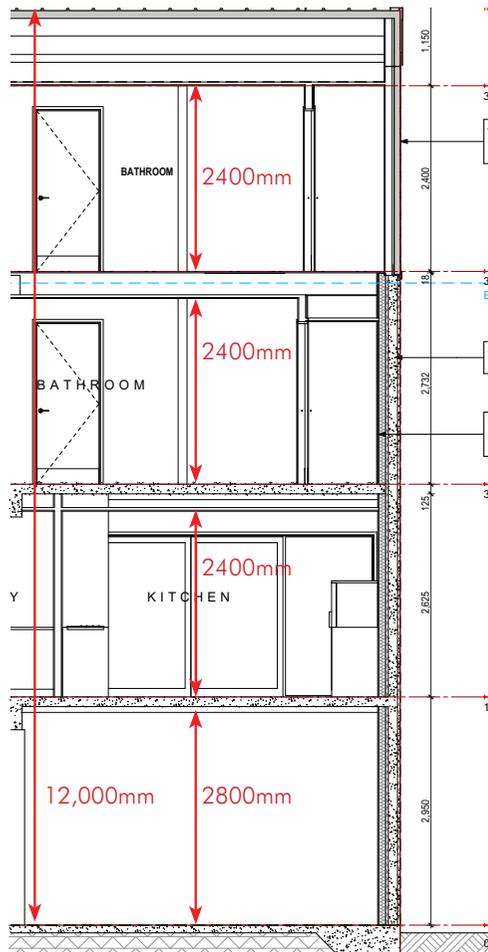


Figure 7a

5 ATHOL STREET APARTMENTS - Low Quality  
(low interior heights, no space for coordinated services).

**PRECEDENT FLOOR LEVELS**

Low Quality vs. High Quality Spaces taken from local built examples.

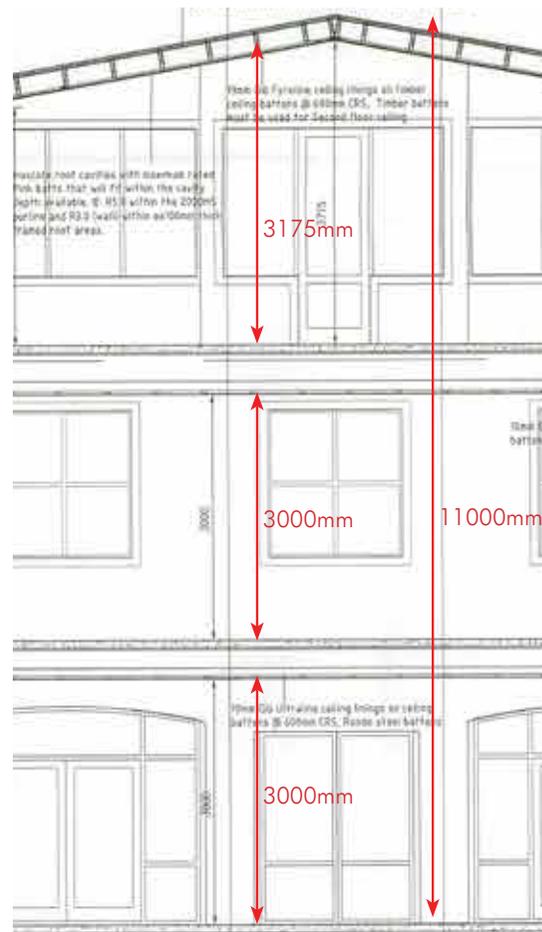


Figure 7b

10 ATHOL STREET - Mountain Scene Building  
Higher internal floor heights, better quality.

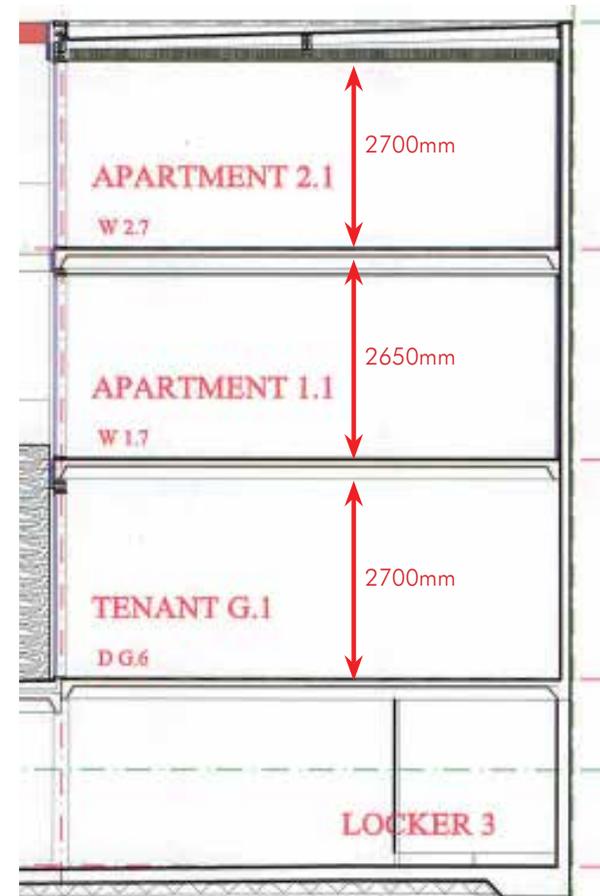


Figure 7c

151 Ardmore Street - Trout Bar, Alchemy Cafe, Beachfront  
Luxury Apartments.  
Higher internal floor heights, better quality, but still  
minimum retail heights at ground level and lacking space  
for coordinated services.

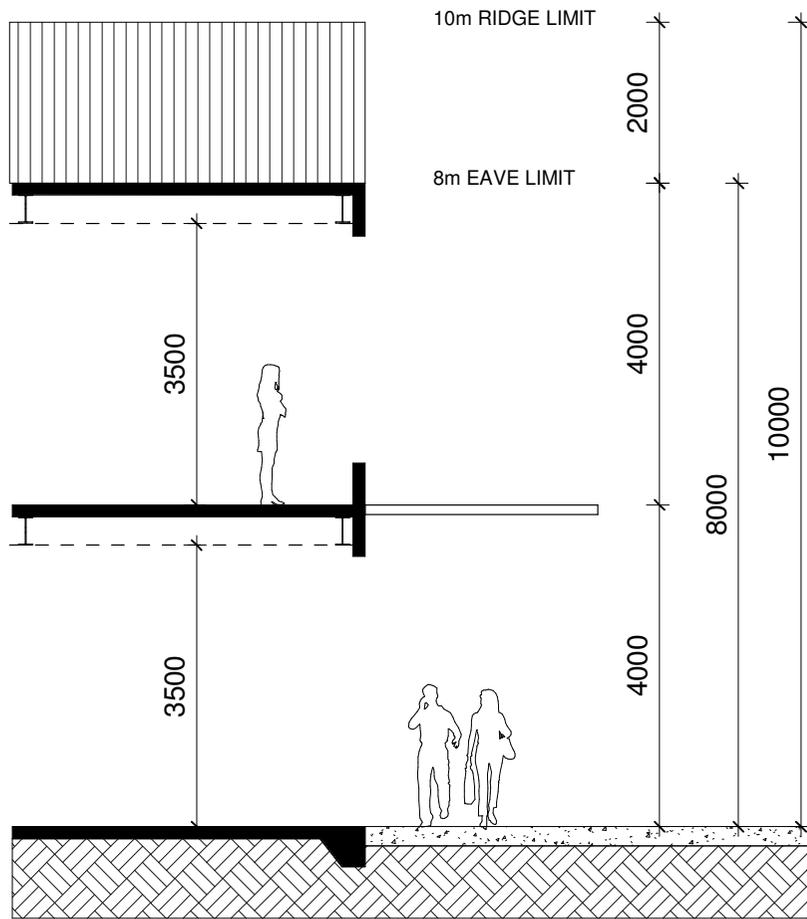


Figure 8a

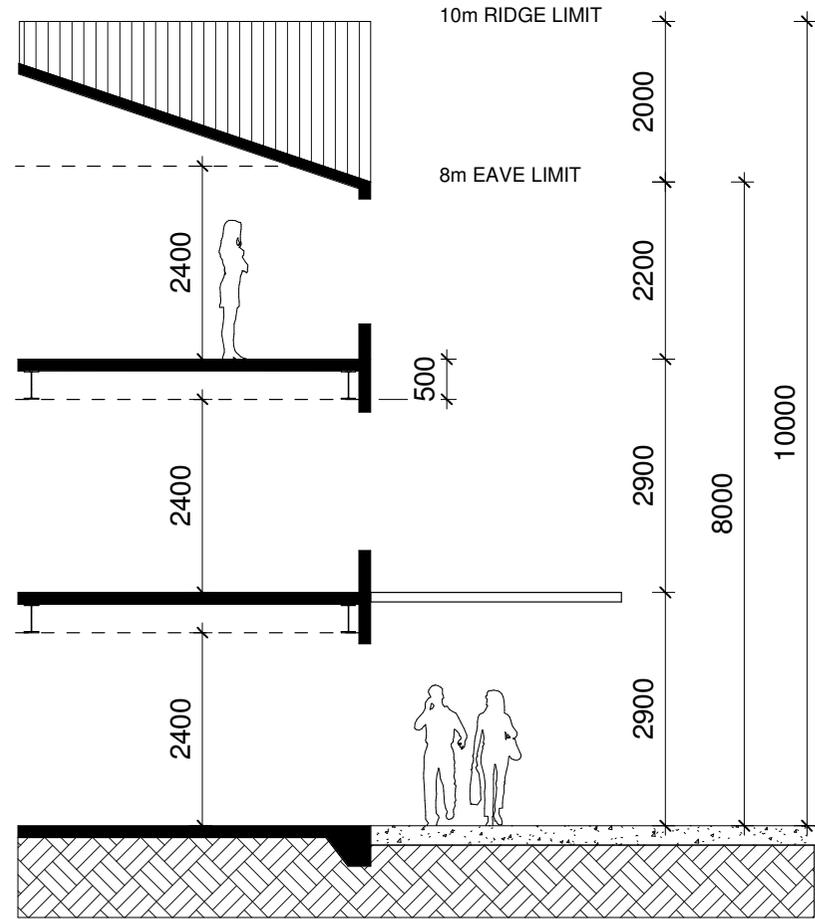


Figure 8b

**INTERPRETIVE SKETCHES FOR EXISTING RULE 13.5.8**

**IMPLICATIONS OF 8-10m HEIGHT CONSTRAINTS**

The design implications of 8-10m height limits. These have follow on impacts for ceiling heights and spatial quality. 8-10m allows a good 2 storey development or poor 3 storey development.

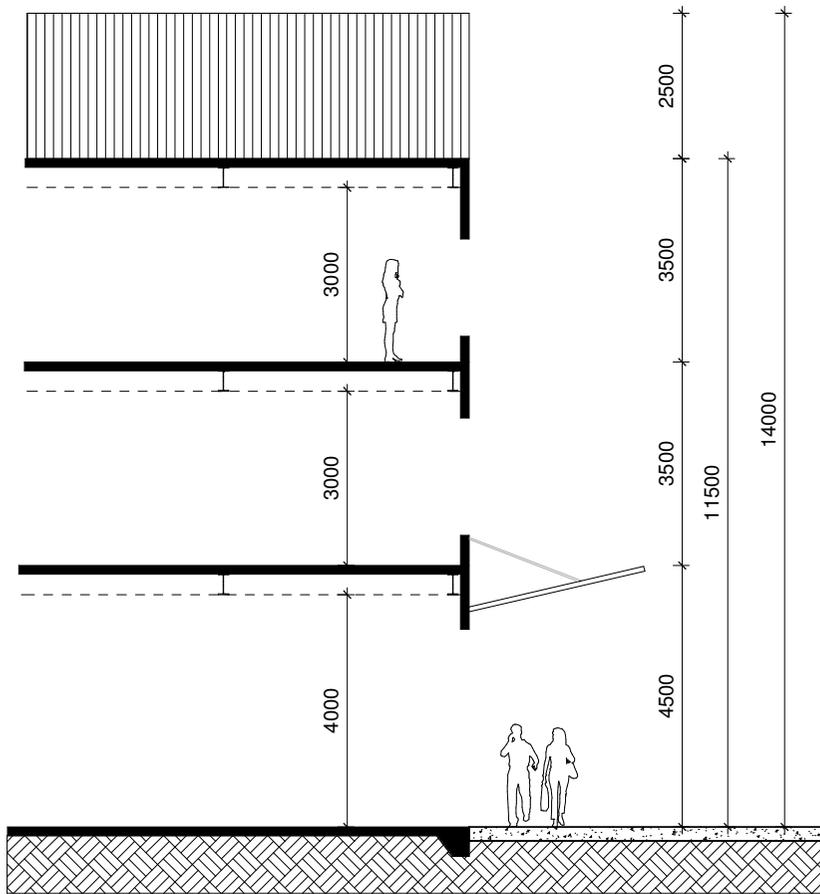


Figure 9a

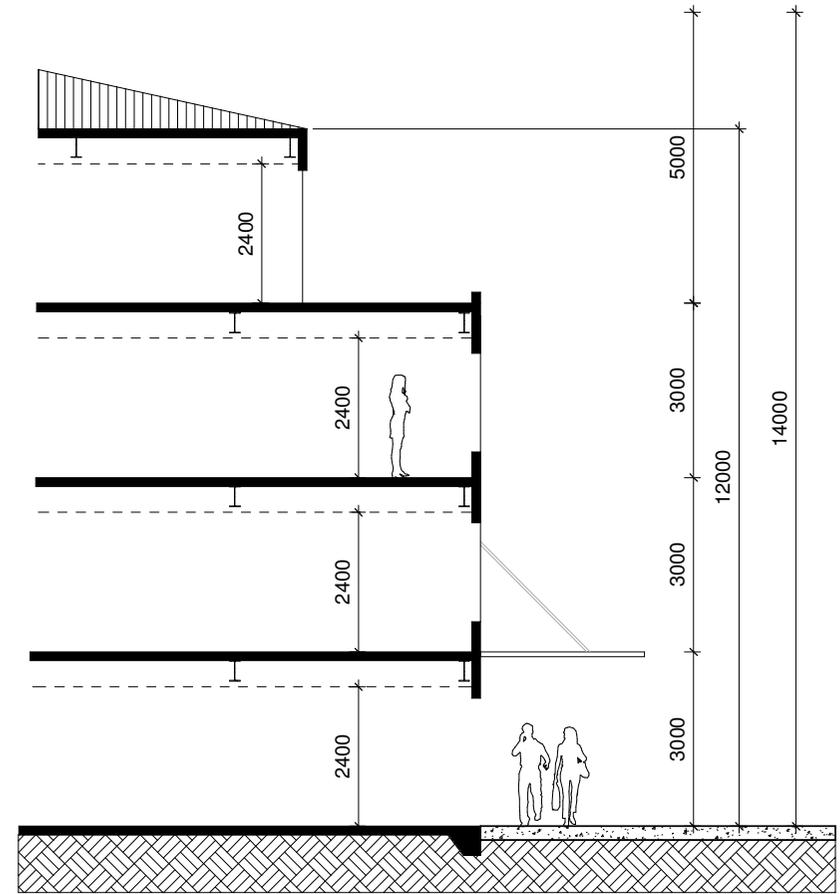


Figure 9b

### INTERPRETATIVE SKETCHES OF PROPOSED RULE 13.5.9

#### DESIGN IMPLICATIONS OF 12-14m HEIGHT CONSTRAINTS

Design implications of proposed height precinct rule on ceiling heights and spatial quality.

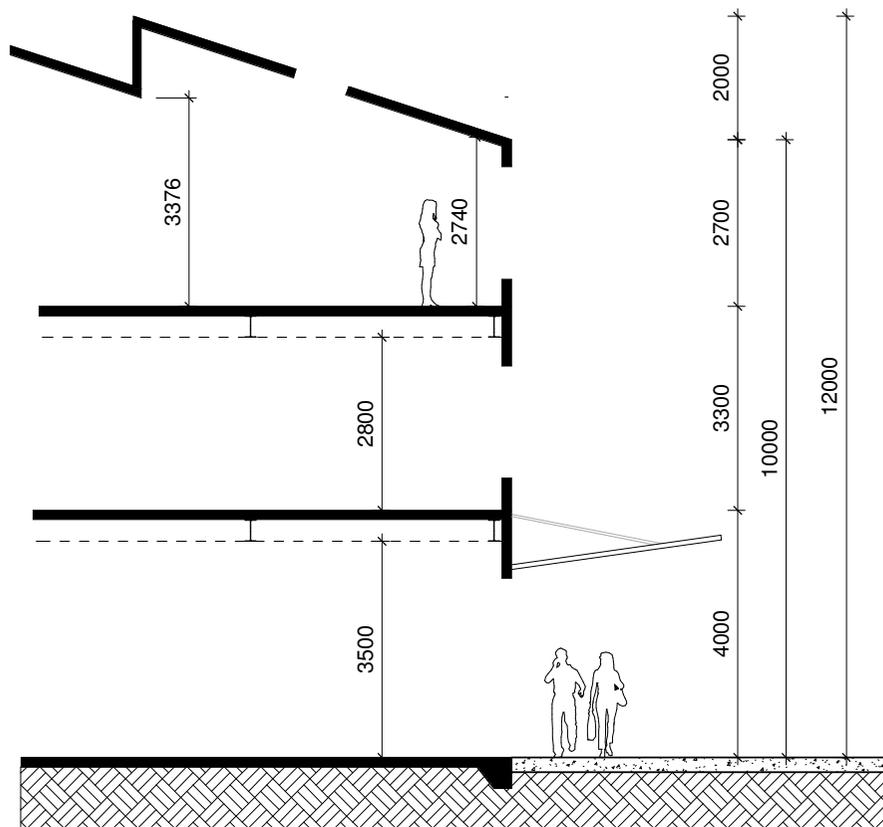
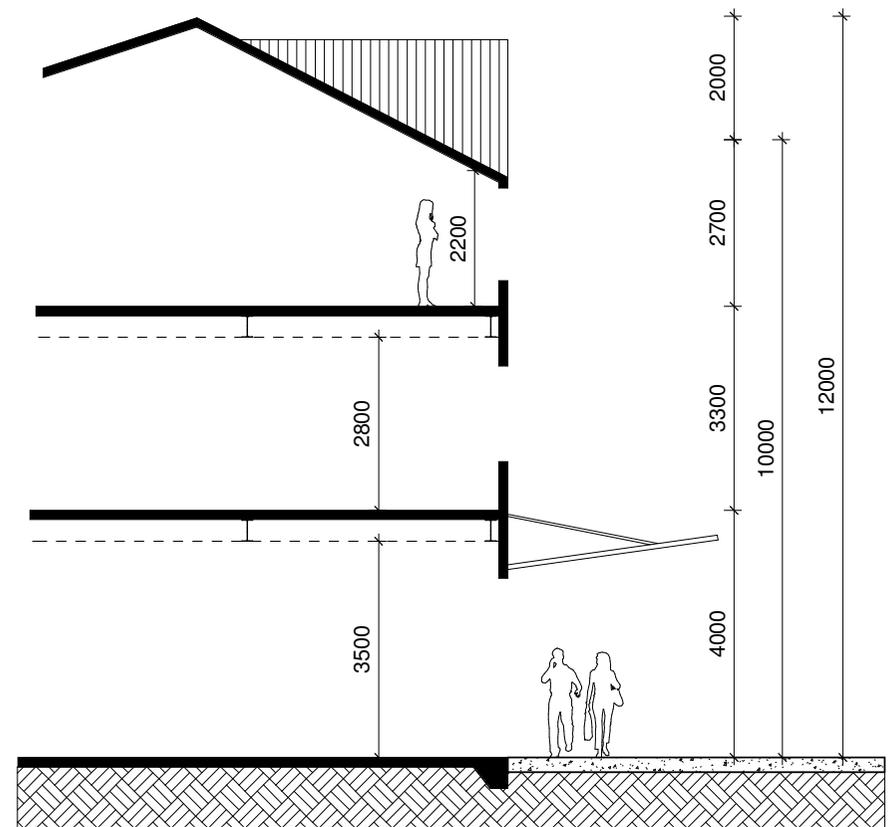


Figure 10a

High Quality Design A



High Quality Design B

Figure 10b

**INTERPRETATIVE SKETCHES OF 10-12m HEIGHT CONSTRAINTS**

**QUALITY FIRST DESIGN APPROACH**

High quality three storey building, achieving roof articulation

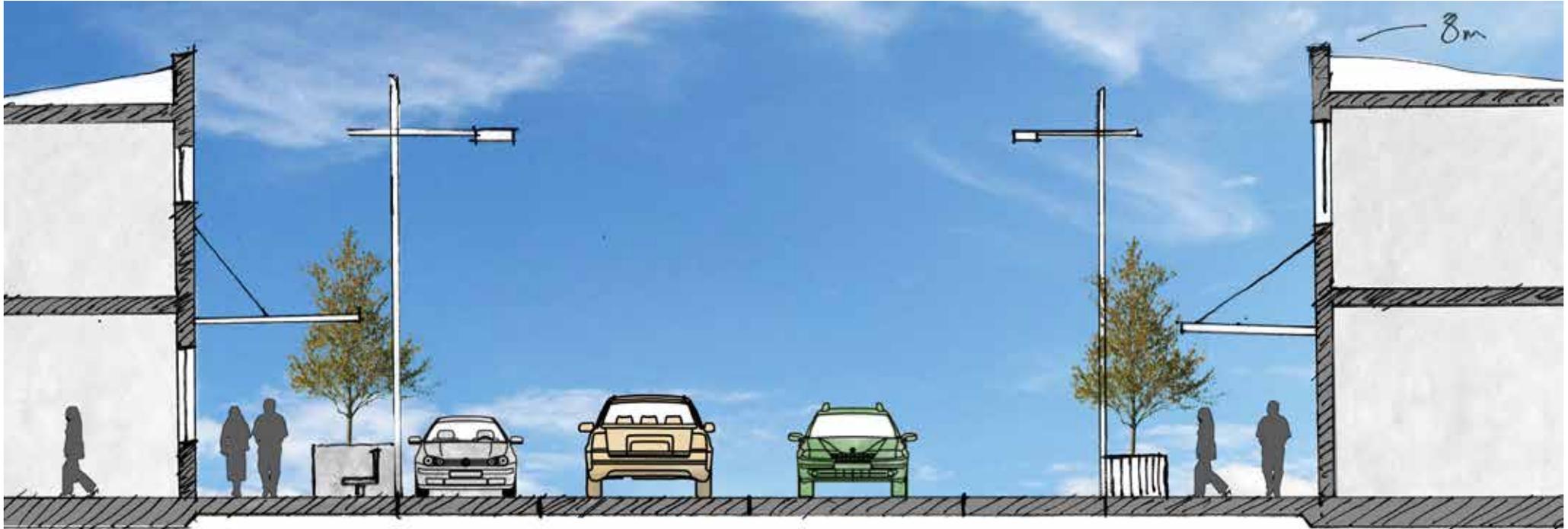


Figure 11

FOOTPATH  
3800mm

PARKING  
2500mm

ROAD  
3750mm

ROAD  
3750mm

PARKING  
2500mm

FOOTPATH  
3800mm

Wanaka Town Centre  
Character Guideline  
(2011) redrawn by AAL

## HELWICK STREET CROSS SECTIONS

Existing Character Guidelines

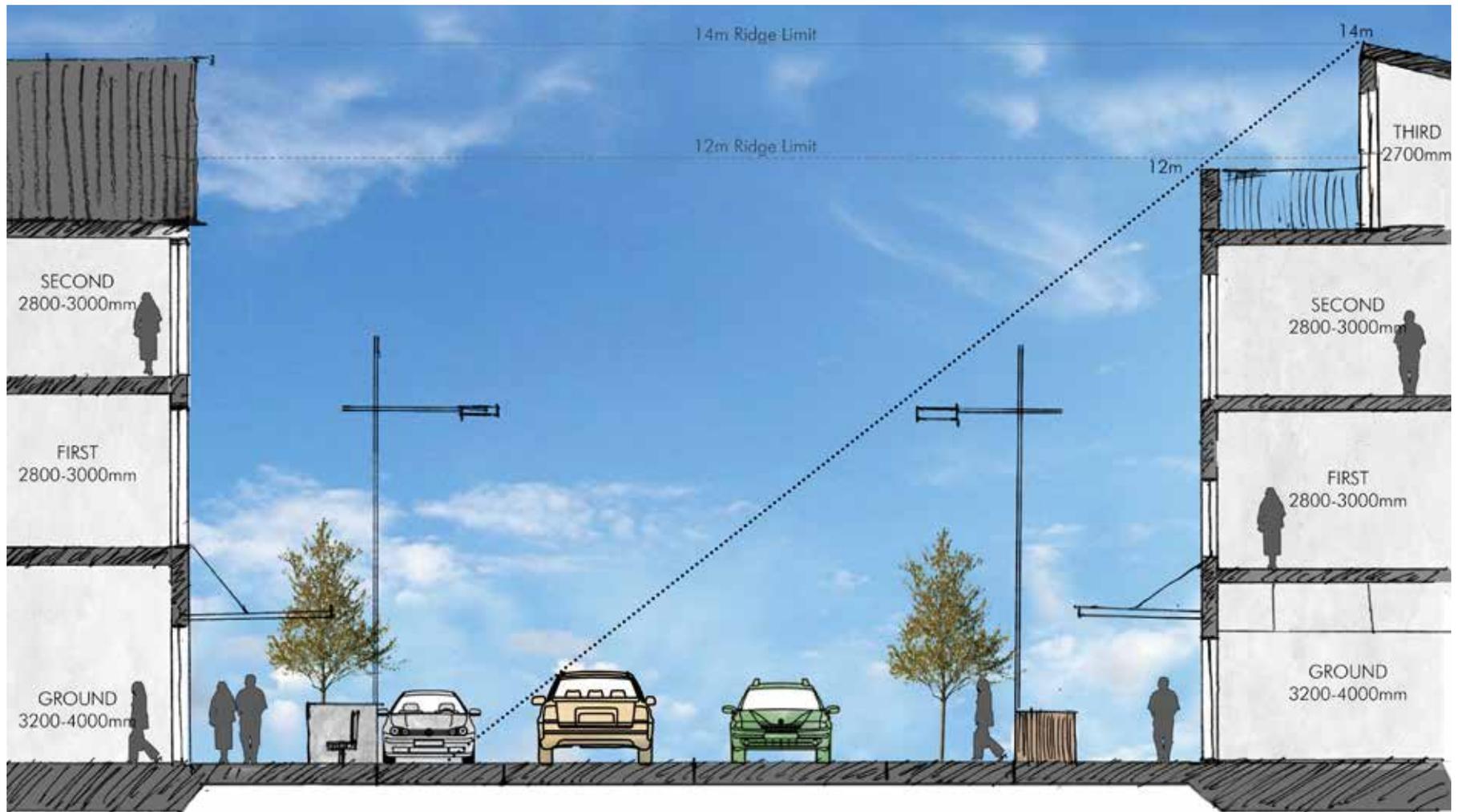


Figure 12

Wanaka Town Centre  
Character Guideline  
(2011) adapted by AAL

## HELWICK STREET CROSS SECTION IN 12-14m HEIGHT CONSTRAINT

Potential Effects of Height Increases.



Figure 13

**BROWNSTON STREET EXISTING**



Figure 14

### **BROWNSTON STREET PERSPECTIVE**

Approximated height increase enhances viewshaft down Brownston and leads the eye down Helwick Street. It defines the entry to the town centre and lead to the lakefront.



Figure 15

**HELWICK STREET EXISTING**



Figure 16

### **HELWICK STREET PERSPECTIVE**

Approximated height increase enhances viewshaft down Helwick, enhancing connection to the lakeshore, lake and Buchanan Peaks. It defines Helwick Street as the entry to the town centre, leading to the lakefront.



**DUNMORE STREET EXISTING**

Figure 17



Figure 18

### **DUNMORE STREET PERSPECTIVE**

Approximated height increase enhances viewshaft down Dunmore, enhancing Roys Peak, and creating more legibility with established lakefront buildings and producing a higher quality perimeter block to define town centre "precinct."