

Submission on the Arrowtown Design Guidelines

Arrowtown Planning Advisory Group August 2016

The Arrowtown Planning Advisory Group stemmed from the Arrowtown Planning Group that was established as part of a council amalgamation agreement in 1989. After the current District Plan finally became operative, the terms of reference were laid out for an Arrowtown Planning Advisory Group (APAG) in 2004. The 2003 community workshop called for such a group to be formed. The group's function is quite wide. It advises council (specifically the planning department) on any matters relating to history or development in Arrowtown. This is more defined as commenting on development in the heritage management zones in Arrowtown and comment was based around the objectives, policies and rules in the District Plan. The 2003 workshop also called for Design Guidelines to be produced for the 'old town' and this was undertaken in 2006 and these guidelines were adopted by council. They are what's known as the Arrowtown Design Guidelines 2006.

Since 2006 the guidelines have been an invaluable tool in the tool box of the APAG and have guided successful development in Arrowtown's heritage zones for the last 10 years. Development in these zones, generally requires a resource consent. The APAG a free volunteer service and has resulted in locals with expert knowledge making themselves available to advise and guide applicants, architects, planners and developers.

The 2006 Guidelines made mention of the new town and it was always hoped that aspects of the old town would be reflected in new development. This was not intended to mimic the past but get development that was sympathetic in terms of scale, design and materials. Unfortunately a lot of new development has not respected this and many people are disappointed in what has occurred in some parts of Arrowtown with huge houses that pay no respect to the Arrowtown vernacular.

Architects, designers and owners have almost always supported the process in the old town as it has reduced planning costs and ensured quality results. Since 2004 only 2 or 3 owners/developers have objected to the use of the guidelines. Most people find it a very valuable and collaborative process. The results have generally been considered to be excellent and the old town is seen to have retained its character and amenity while allowing for sustainable redevelopment and new building to occur.

The Design Guidelines 2006 and now 2016, are fine grained and talk about things like suitable planting, footpaths, swales, kerb and channel and lighting. One thing the APAG is aware of, is the low key engineering in 'old' Arrowtown which has repeatedly been seen as a point of difference, that adds to the amenity and character. This has been confirmed by the community in the 1994 and 2003 workshops and the 2015 Shaping our Future forum. We are aware traffic, pedestrian and parking pressures are having an impact on low key infrastructure and some people are calling for sealed footpaths. We support the status quo as outlined in the guidelines but seek better council maintenance in terms of gravelling footpaths and cleaning out drains and swales.

We support sensitive street lighting that adequately guides pedestrians but allows the night sky to still be viewed.

The APAG have always been concerned about inappropriate development in the 'new town' and these concerns were further raised when council proposed mid density zoning in parts of the 'new' town. To that end, if mid density zoning is to occur, the APAG supports the use of design guidelines to vet multi-unit development. The APAG also supports the neighbourhoods in the new town to be included in the guidelines. The APAG was told that the intention was to use the guidelines for all of Arrowtown. This has been done in Millbrook and Jack's Point for instance. It is not trying to make Arrowtown a special zone but say that if you build in Arrowtown there are certain expectations.

What the message seems to be is:

That there are development rights presently existing in the new town that allow development of a single house as a controlled activity (if all the site rules are adhered to).

There is no need to take any notice of the guidelines if you don't wish to in the new town but we are hoping that you as property owners, architects and designers will take consideration of the guidelines when planning development or redevelopment of sites in the new town.

We had hoped for a more overarching use of the guidelines to cover all development.

Generally we see the Arrowtown Guidelines 2016 as an excellent document that will continue to work well in Arrowtown and ensure sensitive development in the 'old town' while assisting development in the new town in terms of scale, character and amenity. We were concerned at the public meeting on the guidelines to hear comments suggesting the guidelines were trying to make Arrowtown into a museum and were denying people their rights. In our view this is not the intention and we see the balance being between retaining the character that is universally appreciated and allowing reasonable and responsible development rights.

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