

# What's changing in the Residential Zones and the “residential red zone”?

Residential Suburban, Residential Suburban Density Transition, Residential Medium Density, Residential Banks Peninsula, Residential Hills, Residential Large Lot, Residential Small Settlement, Residential New Neighbourhood Zone, Residential Guest Accommodation, Residential Central City, Specific Purpose (Flat Land Recovery) Zones

## There are changes in how we manage land use within residential zones under the new Christchurch District Plan.

These changes include the Specific Purpose (Flat Land Recovery) Zone that applies to the “residential red zone” at Brooklands, along the Avon River and around Southshore.

We highlight some of the main changes from the Christchurch City Plan and the Banks Peninsula District Plan. These reflect decisions by the Independent Hearings Panel on the proposed Christchurch Replacement District Plan.

The following zone abbreviations are used throughout this document. Also indicated is the previous broadly similar zone from the former Christchurch City Plan and the Banks Peninsula District Plan:

- Residential Suburban Zone – RS (similar to Living 1)
- Residential Suburban Density Transition Zone – RSDT (similar to Living 2)
- Residential Medium Density Zone – RMD (similar to Living 3)
- Residential Banks Peninsula Zone – RBP (similar to Banks Residential)
- Residential Hills Zone – RH (similar to Living Hills)
- Residential Large Lot Zone – RLL (incorporates Living Hills A and Hills B. Banks Rural Residential and Akaroa Hillslopes)

- Residential Small Settlement Zone – RSS (similar to Living Rural Settlement and Banks Small Settlement)
- Residential New Neighbourhood Zone – RNN (similar to Living G)
- Residential Guest Accommodation Zone – RGA (similar to Living 5)
- Residential Central City Zone – RCC (similar to Living 4, 4A and 4B)
- Specific Purpose (Flat Land Recovery) Zone – SP (FLR) (new).



## Housing supply

- We have a post-earthquakes target of 23,700 extra homes in Christchurch by 2028, covering a range of housing types. This will be achieved through a combination of residential intensification, brownfield and greenfield development.
- The Plan permits a greater density of housing through new and expanded RMD or RCC zoned areas around the following centres: Bishopdale (and along Harewood Road), Hornby, Merivale, Papanui, Shirley, Linwood, and in and close to the Central City.
- New residential development in medium density areas is required to achieve a minimum density of 30 households per hectare and Central City residential developments must achieve 50 households per hectare.
- Many residential zones now permit greater housing density, including the RS, RSDT and the RMD zones, with an increased range of housing types permitted. These include minor residential units (additional to a principal residential unit on the site), student hostels, social housing complexes, older persons housing units, and retirement villages (see below for more details).
- Two residential units can replace a residential unit that is uneconomic to repair following the earthquakes, in most residential zones. People can also construct two residential units on a site that was vacant before the earthquakes. In both cases, the site must not be in Flood Management Areas or tsunami inundation areas.
- The Residential New Neighbourhood Zone applies to almost all recently developed and yet to be developed residential areas (identified as Residential Greenfield Priority Areas in the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement). The zone allows a wide range of residential house types and section sizes and generally requires a minimum residential density of 15 households per hectare, which is greater than the traditional densities in new subdivisions. This includes provision for comprehensive residential developments on sites with a minimum land area of 6000m<sup>2</sup> where land use and subdivision applications are considered together. Some development standards are relaxed to permit greater development flexibility for comprehensive residential developments. Each Residential New Neighbourhood Zone area has an Outline Development Plan (see Chapter 8 of the District Plan) that directs the form of development of the area, including the principal infrastructure required.

## Multi-unit residential development, including social housing complexes

- A wider range of multi-unit residential developments (i.e. where more than one residential unit is built on a property) are now allowed.
- The RS zone generally permits residential units if each unit has a minimum area of land (“site area”) of 450m<sup>2</sup>. Multi-unit developments with less than the minimum site area for each residential unit normally require a resource consent as a discretionary activity.
- in the RS zone, in Community Housing Redevelopment Mechanism areas (see Planning Maps), which are areas where there is already a high proportion of Housing NZ housing, multi-unit residential developments can be constructed with no minimum site area required for each unit. This applies to the redevelopment of social housing by Housing NZ, the Council or a not-for-profit housing provider, and requires a resource consent as a restricted discretionary activity.
- In the RSDT zone, multi-unit residential developments can be developed as permitted activities either;
  - with each unit having a minimum site area of 330m<sup>2</sup>, or
  - with no minimum site area required for each unit as a “multi-unit residential complex”, for between two to four units on a property. However, such “multi-unit residential complex” developments must meet minimum floor area requirements, room location and other specific requirements. The primary determinants of the number of units and the scale of these complexes is the size of the site, daylight recession planes, and, to a lesser extent, building height limits and requirements for open space and car parking. Proposals for more than four units require resource consent as a restricted discretionary activity.
- Multi-unit residential development is also permitted in the RS and RSDT zones as a “social housing complex” with no minimum site area requirement. Social housing complexes must be owned or operated by Housing NZ, the Council or a not-for-profit housing provider and contain no more than four residential units. Such developments must meet minimum floor area requirements, and other specific requirements. Proposals for more than four units require resource consent as a restricted discretionary activity.
- In the RMD zone, there is no minimum site area requirement for each residential unit. However, proposals for three or more units require a resource consent as a restricted discretionary activity in respect of design, minimum unit size and the mix of units.
- The Enhanced Development Mechanism allows the construction of multi-unit residential developments in the RSDT, RMD or RBP zones, with no minimum site area requirement for each unit. This mechanism can be applied to sites of more than 1500m<sup>2</sup> when the site is within walking distance of larger commercial centres or a minimum sized supermarket, and a primary or intermediate school, a larger sized open space zone, and a core public transport route. The use of this mechanism requires a restricted discretionary resource consent.

## Other housing options

- In the RS, RSDT, RBP, RH, RLL, RSS and RNN zones, “minor residential units” are allowed if they have a minimum gross floor area of 35m<sup>2</sup> and a maximum gross floor area of 70m<sup>2</sup> or 80m<sup>2</sup> (depending on the specific zone).
- In the RS, RSDT, and RMD zones, student hostels of up to six bedrooms are a permitted activity if a secondary or tertiary education provider owns or operates them.
- Older persons housing units are allowed in most residential zones as a permitted activity where the maximum gross floor area does not exceed 120m<sup>2</sup> (increased from 80m<sup>2</sup> in the City Plan).
- Retirement villages are permitted in the RS, RSDT and RBP zones, subject to a building façade length rule and built form standards. They require a resource consent as a controlled activity in the RNN zone, so long as they meet all the built form standards, and as a restricted discretionary activity in the RMD, RH, RLL, RSS and RCC zones.

## Amenity and character

The character and amenity of neighbourhoods is managed primarily through the activities provided for in each zone and the built form standards. The main changes to built form standards (in the broadly equivalent zones) are:

### Minimum site size:

- In the RS zone the minimum site size remains at 450m<sup>2</sup>, but a residential unit may be built on a site of between 400m<sup>2</sup> and 450m<sup>2</sup> through a resource consent as a restricted discretionary activity. Previously the resource consent required was for a fully discretionary activity, or a non-complying activity if below 420m<sup>2</sup>. In the RSDT zone the minimum site size remains at 330m<sup>2</sup>. A residential unit may be built on a site of between 300m<sup>2</sup> and 330m<sup>2</sup> through a resource consent as a restricted discretionary activity, rather than fully discretionary as was previously the case. There is no minimum site size for a residential unit in the RMD zone, as in the past, but the minimum subdivision size is now 200m<sup>2</sup> (previously 300m<sup>2</sup>).
- There is no minimum site size in most RNN zones, as the number and type of residential units is managed through other controls and resource consent processes.
- In the RCC zone there is no minimum site size for each residential unit. Rather a minimum density is required of one unit per complete 200m<sup>2</sup> of site area. Previously, Floor Area Ratio limits in the L3 and L4A zones (now RCC zones) applied.
- In the RBP, RH, RLL and RSS zones, the minimum site sizes are largely the same as before.

### Road boundary setbacks:

- These remain at 4.5 metres in the RS and RSDT zones.
- Are reduced from four metres in most cases to two metres in the RMD zone.
- Are reduced from 4.5 metres to four metres in the RH zone.
- In the RNN zone the setback is generally four metres (except for Prestons, Wigram and Yaldhurst ODP areas). In the past it varied more.
- In the RCC zone, setbacks were generally reduced from four metres to two metres through the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan, with some variations for the location of garages, and this reduced setback carried through to the District Plan.
- In the RBP, RLL and RSS zones, the road boundary setback used to vary but is now standardised at five metres where the garage faces the road, or slightly less where there is no garage door facing the road.

### Internal boundary setback:

- The building setback from internal boundaries has been reduced from 1.8m to one metre in the RS, RSDT, RNN and RMD zones. The setback in the RSS zone remains at three metres.
- There is a new setback from any rail corridor of four metres in all zones

### Building height:

- This is standardised at eight metres through most of the residential zones (including RH and RLL where it was seven metres previously).
- In the RMD zone the standard permissible height is 11 metres, but there are areas of RMD zoning with a lower height limit of eight metres. In some new RMD areas height can be increased to 11 metres where there is a site size of 1500m<sup>2</sup> or more.
- In the RBP zone the seven metre height limit of the previous plan remains.
- Minor residential units in the residential zones must be single storey.
- Height limits in the RCC Zone range from eight metres to 30 metres. These reflect the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan.

### Site coverage:

- Reduced in the RSDT zone from 40 percent to 35 percent, except Multi-Unit and Social Housing where it is 40 percent.
- In the RMD zone there is a new maximum site coverage limit of 50 percent, replacing the previous floor area ratio limit of 0.8.
- In RBP it is decreased from 35 percent to 30 percent.
- In RNN it is 40 percent on sites of 300m<sup>2</sup> and over, but a higher site coverage is provided for comprehensive residential developments. It previously varied between different Living G areas.

### Outdoor living space:

- In the RS zone this remains at 90m<sup>2</sup>.
- In the RSDT zone it has been reduced to 50m<sup>2</sup>.
- For both the RS and RSDT zones, for Multi-Unit and Social Housing developments, outdoor living space has been reduced to 30m<sup>2</sup> per unit.
- The outdoor living space standard for RMD stays at 30m<sup>2</sup> and in all RNN zones is now standardised at 30m<sup>2</sup>, or 16m<sup>2</sup> for upper floor units in both zones.

### Tree and garden planting:

- Simpler rules for tree and garden planting in the RMD zone require landscaping of 20 percent of the site, including one tree per 250m<sup>2</sup>. The same applies to Multi-Unit and Social Housing in the RS and RSDT zones.

### Fences:

- The maximum height of fences on road boundaries remains at 1.8 metres in most zones. On internal boundaries higher fences may now be built, but fences over two metres in height (including any trellises) are likely to require a resource consent, as the Plan classifies them as buildings.
- In RMD zones road boundary fences continue to be limited to either one metre in height, or up to 1.8 metres when 50 percent of the fence structure is transparent.

### Building reflectivity:

- In the RH, RLL and RSS zones a new building reflectivity rule requires light reflectance off roofs not to exceed 30 percent.

### Service, storage and waste management spaces:

- These are required in the RS and RSDT zones for multi-unit and social housing.

## Areas with special character provisions

- The previous Christchurch City Plan had 34 Special Amenity Areas outside of the Central City and eight in the Central City. The areas had varying rules, sometimes concentrating on only one aspect e.g. road setback, rather than on the combination of qualities that make up character. The Christchurch District Plan now manages the special character values of 15 former Special Amenity Areas as Character Areas, which are all outside the Central City.
- New buildings and alterations now require a resource consent as a controlled activity where the development is visible from the street, is located between the road boundary and the main residential unit, or involves changes to the front façade of the main residential unit. A landscape strip is required along the road boundary. Minimum site sizes also apply to Character Areas – 600m<sup>2</sup> in the RS zone and 400m<sup>2</sup> in the RSDT and RMD zones, which in each case is larger than the usual minimum site size for the zone (RMD normally has no minimum site size).
- Akaroa and Lyttelton (previously in the Residential Conservation Zone) are rezoned Residential Banks Peninsula. All development in the parts of Akaroa and Lyttelton within Character Area Overlays requires a resource consent as a restricted discretionary activity. Impacts on visual and heritage values are matters for consideration.

## Non-residential activities

- All residential zones in the District Plan allow for a wider range of non-residential activities than in the previous City Plan, where some activities previously required resource consent. In addition to home occupations and market or community gardens, most residential zones now also provide for day care of children, bed and breakfast, education activity, preschools, health care, veterinary care, spiritual facilities, places of assembly, community correction and welfare facilities, and emergency facilities, all as permitted activities.
- These non-residential activities are generally required to comply with standards designed to protect the amenity of residential zones, such as scale of development and hours of operation.
- The RCC Zone permits fewer non-residential activities than the other residential zones, as was the case for the central city Living zones in the City Plan when amended by the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan. These are limited to bed and breakfast accommodation, market and community gardens, and small (up to 40m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area) education and spiritual facilities, preschools and guest accommodation.

## Specific Purpose (Flat Land Recovery) Zone

- The Specific Purpose (Flat Land Recovery) Zone for the “residential red zone” at Brooklands, along the Avon River and around Southshore is an interim zone until the long term future of the land is determined through regeneration planning processes. It does not include the small portion of “residential red zone” in the Central City, which is zoned Residential Central City.
- The activities and development permitted on privately owned residential properties in this zone remain similar to those previously permitted in these locations. However, many properties are now subject to natural hazard rules that limit activities and development.
- Proposals for new community facilities on privately owned properties, such as health care facilities, places of assembly or churches, require resource consent as discretionary activities. This includes an assessment of matters such as natural hazard risks and the availability of appropriate infrastructure.
- Commercial activities are permitted in existing commercial buildings, but there are limits on the modification of these buildings.
- The zone also provides for flood protection and other hazard mitigation activities, new infrastructure and its repair and upgrade, temporary activities, and activities relating to property clearance, the use of Crown-owned land and buildings, and security.

Note: the new plan may require resource consents in situations where they were not previously required.

View the new Christchurch District Plan at  
[districtplan.ccc.govt.nz](https://districtplan.ccc.govt.nz)

The information in this document summarises the contents of the Christchurch District Plan in general terms. This information draws on the Christchurch District Plan as it was at the time we were preparing the document, but is not the District Plan. As the Christchurch District Plan is subject to change, anyone seeking the current rules and other provisions of the Christchurch District Plan should refer to [districtplan.ccc.govt.nz](https://districtplan.ccc.govt.nz)

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