

SHAPING OUR PLACES

MEDIA KIT



Background

The New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) represents more than 90 percent of all registered architects in New Zealand. It is a professional body supporting the needs of its members through a range of services. The Institute is committed to promoting architecture that enhances the living environment of all New Zealanders.

As a profession, architects aim to inspire achievement of human potential by enhancing the spiritual, spatial and sustainable qualities of New Zealand's built environment. With this in mind, the Institute has launched *Shaping Our Places: a Manifesto for the Built Environment*. The document outlines the influence the built environment has on how we define ourselves as families, communities, and ultimately as a nation.

It is hoped the manifesto will trigger nationwide debate around the five key concepts of community, sustainability, affordability, heritage, and urban design. The Institute also wants to see some practical changes at the government level that support enhancements to our built environment.

The priorities for change are:

Appointment of a Government Architect responsible for whole-of-government advice and leadership on design and located within a central co-ordinating agency.

Input into the infrastructure programme to ensure that infrastructure projects are well integrated and consistent with best practice design principles.

Amendment of the Resource Management Act to ensure that areas identified as being of national architectural significance are protected.

Government level encouragement of the use of urban design advisory panels at the district plan level.

Government recognition of the concept of modern heritage and protection to the same extent as historical heritage.

Over the coming months the Institute will campaign on these priorities at both a central and local government level. To keep up-to-date with what's happening, visit www.shapingourplaces.com

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of this campaign?

The shape our towns and cities affects the lives of communities. Gridlock, urban sprawl, poor transport planning, and dislocated communities are some of the costs of poor design and planning. We are at a critical point in our nation's development as the government commits billions to infrastructure development, the Auckland Council comes together, and resource management and urban planning reform progress. Through good design we can connect and create communities that work better and are safer. This campaign aims to generate public support for the value of good design in shaping our towns and cities.

How will the campaign change things?

We want to raise New Zealanders' awareness about what is possible through good design. We want the public to demand policies which support good design and enhance the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Good smart design saves money and can make our lives better. NZIA has outlined a number of policy priorities to government which ensure good design.

What does the campaign consist of?

The campaign consists of mobilising stakeholders and the public to demand action on the shape of our towns and cities. Over the coming months we will be talking to politicians, publics, and other stakeholders, engaging with the media, holding events and running an advertising campaign. A new website www.shapingourplaces.co.nz is the main campaign hub. It includes advocacy and media kits, blogs, news items, and policy papers and submissions. The website will be regularly updated with developments on the campaign.

Why should we care?

Anyone who is part of a community, lives in a town or city should care because these decisions impact on everyone. They determine where and how we live, our available modes of transport and recreational activities. Good design about more than just aesthetics. It is about creating long-term value – economic, social, and environmental. For example, well-designed neighbourhoods benefit from lower crime rates and higher property values, while research shows that well-designed schools improve the educational achievement of their students. Through good design we can connect and create communities that work better, are safer, and add to quality of life.

Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Wasn't the Urban Design Protocol set up to do this?

The protocol was launched in 2005 to provide a platform for enhanced urban design. A number of local councils have signed up to the protocol and appointed urban design managers and architects to assist with implementing aspects of the protocol in their areas. Quality urban design is one aspect of the built environment. Shaping Our Places identifies four other aspects/concepts.

What does "built environment" mean?

The built environment refers to the man-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging from large-scale civic surroundings to personal places. Decisions on the built environment relate to how we shape our towns and cities. Through good design we can connect and create communities that work better and are safer.

What are the five manifesto concepts referred to?

NZIA have identified five concepts which we think need to be at the forefront of decision making on the shape of our towns and cities. The concepts are: community, sustainability, affordability, heritage, and urban design. It is our view that these foundational concepts which need to underpin decisions on the shape our our towns and cities.

Architects clearly have an 'interest' in advancing good design?

Of course architects have an interest in advancing good design. However, we would argue that everyone should have an interest in how we shape our towns and cities because it ultimately impacts on them and their lifestyles. Through good design we can connect and create communities that work better, are safer, and add to quality of life.

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.shapingourplaces.co.nz for up-to-date news and information about what's happening, campaign developments, policy information and submissions, and blog discussions. The website is the central organising and information hub for the campaign. You can also sign up for the e-newsletter.

Media Release (1 September 2009)

NZIA takes bold new stance on urban design reform

Tomorrow the New Zealand Institute of Architects will launch a publication called *Shaping our places: a manifesto for the Built Environment* at Parliament, the President of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA), Richard Harris announced today.

“Shaping our places is timely because our towns and cities are falling short of what they could be. We have to do better, and we can do better. Consistently building great places to live, work and play is critical to our prosperity as a nation,” Mr Harris said.

The NZIA produced publication *Shaping our places* is a guide for New Zealand’s towns and cities. It is a stake in the ground stating NZIA’s position on five key concepts: community, sustainability, affordability, heritage, and urban design. It provides the value case for good practical design highlighting notable New Zealand buildings and places.

“More than ever we need to pay closer attention to how we develop our towns and cities particularly as the government commits billions to infrastructure development. *Shaping our places* is intended to spark discussion, debate, and influence at all levels of decision making on this defining subject.

“This is something which we care about because it has huge economic, social, environmental and cultural implications – both positive and negative. Our aim is well functioning urban environments for New Zealanders that are efficient, productive and great places to live, work and visit. With 85 percent of New Zealanders living in urban environments, these decisions have real consequences for all of us.

“This is where *Shaping our places* can help,” Mr Harris said.

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