

MAKING TALBOT PARK A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE

Auckland's Talbot Park Community Renewal Project is a flagship for sustainable, community-based approaches to urban renewal.

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The Talbot Park Community Renewal Project aims to address social exclusion and foster strong, sustainable communities, creating places where people want to live – where there is a sense of empowerment, social cohesion, safety and security, an integrated range of services and housing which reflects residents' needs. The programme was launched in 2002 as part of Housing New Zealand Corporation's Community Renewal programme, which is underway in six locations throughout the country.

Changing the state of housing

Situated in Glen Innes, Auckland City, Talbot Park is an area of high deprivation characterised by low levels of income, education and home ownership, and high levels of welfare dependency, unemployment, single parent families, rental properties and overcrowding.

State housing built in the early 1960s dominates the area, with Housing New Zealand owning 167 of the original 180 properties. The original development consisted of nine 3-storey 'star blocks' and 59 2-storey multi-unit blocks and duplex flats.

The layout was based around a long, linear park and two short cul-de-sacs. This created a very unsafe open space with limited connections. The space was too narrow to be useful, and the surrounding houses backed onto it, limiting surveillance. The housing was outdated and needed upgrading to meet the needs of today's families. Also, the 4-hectare block was underdeveloped by current urban development standards, and located in an area identified for growth by Auckland City Council.

This 5-year community renewal project is a three-way partnership between Housing New Zealand, Auckland City Council and the Glen Innes community and is expected to cost up to \$48.6 million. It has included building and modernising 219 homes and redeveloping the entire 4 hectare Talbot Park site.

Demonstration project

Talbot Park was selected as the 'demonstration project' for the community renewal programme because of its prominent location next to the town centre, and urban design issues caused by its poor layout and outdated housing. It also shows what is possible under the Auckland City District Plan new Residential 8 zone development provisions.

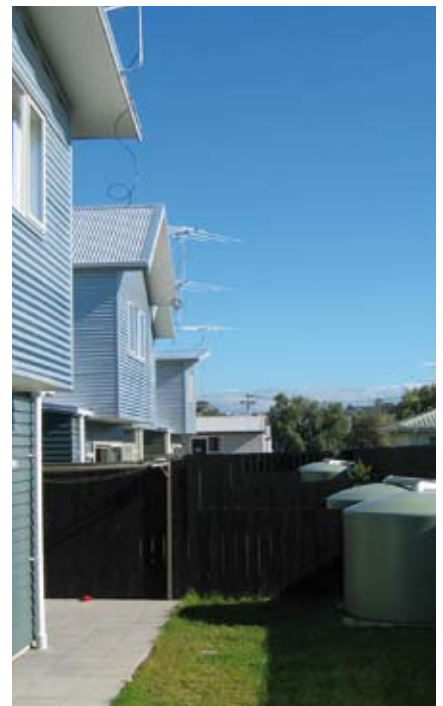
Some of New Zealand's leading firms were contracted to design the site, including Boffa Miskell as lead consultants for master planning, consultation and landscape design. Architectural firms involved included Pepper Dixon, Architectus, Bailey Architects, Common Ground and Design Group (Stapleton Architects, ASC Architects and CCC Architects). The original master plan was prepared jointly by Housing New Zealand and Geoffrey Walker (Urban Designer).

Sustainability at heart of design

All 59 multi-blocks have been removed. These have been refurbished where practicable and used as relocatable homes in other housing programmes. All nine star blocks (108 units) have been retained and extensively refurbished (including new foyers, roofs and decks). →



The old 1960s State housing at Talbot Park was in need of upgrading.



Rainwater is collected from the new buildings for use in toilet cisterns and outside taps.



Solar water heating systems are included on some properties.



Permeable paving system for stormwater.

Two new parks are being created – the larger park is located as close as possible to the town centre to encourage external use. Both parks have open street frontage and are overlooked from surrounding houses.

New roads have increased connectivity and facilitated movement through the block. These connect to the town centre and provide direct street access to the existing star blocks. Narrower roads have been designed to limit speed and increase pedestrian/cycling safety.

A wide variety of house types and architectural styles have been included. Houses range from large family homes (4–8-bedroom), terrace houses (3-bedroom) and four different types of 2-bedroom apartments. The new house designs reflect Housing New Zealand's Maori and Pacific Residential Design Guides.

Elements of sustainable/low impact design include increased insulation standards, passive solar design, use of permeable paving and rain gardens to treat stormwater runoff, and fitting some units with solar hot water panels and rainwater tanks.

'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' principles have been used to ensure all public spaces are clearly defined and overlooked, streets and parks are connected and visible, and streetlights use 'white light'.

Building the capacity of Housing New Zealand's tenants and community members

has been important to ensure long-term sustainability of the project. This included increasing links between community groups and social services and using local labour in building contracts.

Large homes to suit families

Twenty-one large family homes have been constructed at Talbot Park, including eight 4-bedroom, seven 5-bedroom, four 6-bedroom, one 7-bedroom and one 8-bedroom. The 7- and 8-bedroom homes are the first of their size to be purpose built by Housing New Zealand, and have been designed for large, extended families.

The homes are constructed using a range of exterior claddings and colours. All 21 homes have 2-storeys and internal access garaging. The 5–8-bedroom houses have two living areas, large kitchens with stainless steel benches, an accessible downstairs bathroom and another bathroom upstairs. Separate study areas allow quiet spaces for children to work. All homes also feature solar tubes for natural light and are fitted with energy-efficient light bulbs.

Using sun and rain

Solar water heating systems have been included in eight residential homes and one 24-unit apartment complex and provide pre-heating for electric hot water systems.

Housing New Zealand is trialling rainwater collection tank systems in eight units and a 24-unit apartment complex. The rainwater tanks collect water from roofs, which is then used for toilet cisterns and outside taps. The system will bypass to the main water supply if the tank is empty or the power is off. In the apartment complex, the rainwater is used to irrigate communal garden areas as well as serving the 24 toilets.

Rain gardens have been installed within the two new public roads to provide stormwater retention and treatment (funded through an Auckland Regional Council Stormwater grant). Auckland City Council will take over of the long-term maintenance of these features.

Permeable paving systems are being used in patio and carparking areas where possible. The paving system, with associated retention tanks, provides some stormwater retention and treatment benefits and has been funded by Auckland Regional Council.

Benefits noticed already

The Talbot Park Project is now nearing completion after 5 years, with Housing New Zealand beginning to realise the benefits of a sustainable community approach to urban renewal. These have included:

- increased demand to live in a previously undesirable area



Rain gardens within the new public road.

- reduced tenant turnover (reduced from 50% in 2001 to less than 5% currently)
- a significant reduction in incidents of graffiti and other forms of property damage
- tenants reporting they are feeling safer and happier
- tenants coming together as a community with the formation of a Talbot Park Village residents group
- a growing appreciation of the benefits of including environmentally sustainable design features as part of any redevelopment.

The challenge for Housing New Zealand, and the community, is to maintain and build on the successes demonstrated at Talbot Park, for the long-term sustainability of the Talbot Park community and for future urban renewal projects. ◀